



# Parkland Eye & Vision

*Your Family Vision Source*

## HIPPA

### Your Health Information Is Protected By Federal Law

Most of us believe that our medical and other health information is private and should be protected. The Privacy Rule, a Federal law, gives you rights over your health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive your health information. The Privacy Rule applies to all forms of individuals' protected health information, whether electronic, written, or oral. The Security Rule, a Federal law that protects health information in electronic form, requires entities covered by HIPAA to ensure that electronic protected health information is secure.

#### Who Must Follow These Laws

- **Health Plans**, including health insurance companies, HMOs, company health plans, and certain government programs that pay for health care, such as Medicare and Medicaid.
- **Most Health Care Providers**—those that conduct certain business electronically, such as electronically billing your health insurance—including most doctors; clinics; hospitals; psychologists; chiropractors; nursing homes; pharmacies; dentists.
- **Health Care Clearinghouses**—entities that process nonstandard health information they receive from another entity into a standard (i.e., standard electronic format or data content), or vice versa.

#### What Information Is Protected

- Information your doctors, nurses, and other health care providers put in your medical record
- Conversations your doctor has about your care or treatment with nurses and others
- Information about you in your health insurer's computer system
- Billing information about you at your clinic
- Most other health information about you held by those who must follow these laws

#### How Is This Information Protected

- Covered entities must put in place safeguards to protect your health information.
- Covered entities must reasonably limit uses and disclosures to the minimum necessary to accomplish their intended purpose.
- Covered entities must have contracts in place with their contractors and others ensuring that they use and disclose your health information properly and safeguard it appropriately.
- Covered entities must have procedures in place to limit who can view and access your health information as well as implement training programs for employees about how to protect your health information.

#### Who Can Look at and Receive Your Health Information

To make sure that your health information is protected in a way that does not interfere with your health care, your information can be used and shared:

- For your treatment and care coordination
- To pay doctors and hospitals for your health care and to help run their businesses
- With patient authorization—your family, relatives, friends, or others you identify who are involved with your health care or your health care bills.
- To make sure doctors give good care and nursing homes are clean and safe
- To protect the public's health, such as by reporting when the flu is in your area
- To make required reports to the police, such as reporting gunshot wounds

#### Your health information cannot be used or shared without your written permission unless this law allows it.

For example, without your authorization, your provider generally cannot:

- Give your information to your employer
- Use or share your information for marketing or advertising purposes
- Share private notes about your health care