

Privacy Notice Regarding Patient Records

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

The Texas Optometry Board is not a covered entity as defined by federal government regulations regarding privacy of patient records. The Board is however, required by state law (Health & Safety Code Chapter 181) to comply with the federal regulations, to protect the privacy of identifiable patient health information and provide this notice. The Texas Optometry Act does not contain provisions regarding the privacy of patient records. The Board will not disclose any identifiable patient health information provided to it with the permission of a patient, except for those uses described in the next paragraph.

If you give permission for the Texas Optometry Board to obtain a copy of patient records covering your health care, the Board will use these records to investigate your complaint. This investigation may require that these patient records be disclosed to Board staff, Board members, other state agencies, the legislature, optometrists from whom an opinion is requested by the Board, the Board's legal counsel, and any parties or participants in an administrative hearing or court proceeding regarding your complaint. Any other use would require your additional consent. You may revoke your authorization to use the records as described in this paragraph, but doing so may prevent the Board from investigating your complaint.

The Board may revise this notice. If your records are still maintained by the Board, you will be sent a copy of the revised notice. The Board does not request, maintain or compile original patient records. Any questions regarding your patient records should be directed to your health care provider. The Board may have received patient records prior to the effective date of federal government regulations regarding privacy of patient records, at which time the records were not protected from disclosure by federal or state law. The Board will limit the disclosure of these records as described in this notice

Complaints regarding violations of the privacy rights of persons authorizing the Board to obtain a copy of patient records may be made to the Texas Optometry Board or the Texas Attorney General. For further information, contact Dennis Riggins, Investigator, Texas Optometry Board, 512-305-8500. This notice is effective April 14, 2003.