



## The MECCA Group, LLC.

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## Notice of Privacy and Practices

**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 MECCA Group, LLC (referred to as “MECCA” in this document) is dedicated to protecting your medical information. MECCA is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with this Notice of legal duties and privacy practices because of the privacy regulations of a federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Because of this law, other federal laws, and the laws of the District of Columbia, this Notice explains how, when, and why MECCA may use your “Protected Health Information” (PHI). MECCA is also required by law to follow and abide by the terms of this Notice.

### USE OF YOUR PHI

Each time you visit MECCA, information may be collected about your past, present, or future health or conditions, or the treatment or other services you received from MECCA, or from others, or about payment for health care. MECCA collects from you what is called, in the law, **PHI**, which stands for **Protected Health Information**. This information goes into your medical or health care record or file at the MECCA office.

MECCA may use and disclose your medical or other private health information without your permission under federal and District of Columbia laws for the following purposes:

- **For Treatment:** MECCA may use and disclose your PHI to any staff, including trainees at MECCA, involved in your care, to provide treatment services for your health care needs. MECCA may also share your PHI with other clinicians or other health care providers that will provide services that we do not provide. This will be done typically to coordinate the care and services you might require.
- **For Payment:** MECCA may use and disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for your health care services. This will

typically be done on occasion, when MECCA incurs costs involving your insurer. For example, we give your health plan the information it requires before it will pay us. We may also disclose information to other health care providers to assist them in obtaining payment for services they have provided to you.

- **For Health Care Operations:** MECCA may use and disclose your PHI in the course of health care operations. Your PHI may be used in assessing the quality of the services provided by MECCA; accreditation, certification, and licensing; and conducting medical reviews, audits and legal services. MECCA may also share your medical information with our "business associates," such as our billing service, that perform administrative services for us. We have a written contract with each of these business associates that contains terms requiring them and their subcontractors to protect the confidentiality and security of your protected health information. MECCA may also share your information with other health care providers, health care clearinghouses or health plans that have a relationship with you, when they request this information to help them with their quality assessment and improvement activities, their patient-safety activities, their population-based efforts to improve health or reduce health care costs, their protocol development, case management or care-coordination activities, their review of competence, qualifications and performance of health care professionals, their training programs, their accreditation, certification or licensing activities, or their health care fraud and abuse detection and compliance efforts.
- **Appointment Reminders:** MECCA may use and disclose your PHI to contact you regarding your appointments for treatment or other health care related services.
- **Sign In Sheet:** MECCA may use and disclose medical information about you by having you sign in when you arrive at our office. We may also call out your name when we are ready to see you.
- **Disclosures to Family, Friends, or Others:** MECCA may disclose your PHI with your consent. MECCA may give your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person who you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your care with your consent. In the event of a disaster, we may disclose information to a relief organization so that they may coordinate these notification efforts. If you are able and available to agree or object, MECCA will give you the opportunity to object prior to making these disclosures, although we may disclose this information in a disaster even over your objection if we believe it is necessary to respond to the emergency circumstances. If you are unable or unavailable to agree or object, our health professionals will use their best judgment in communication with your family and others.

- **Parents as Personal Representatives of Minors:** MECCA may disclose a minor's PHI to a parent or legal guardian. However, District of Columbia laws may require The MECCA Group LLC to deny a parent's access to a minor's PHI.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** MECCA may, if we believe that a serious threat exists to your health or safety, or to the health and safety of any other person or the public, use or disclose your PHI to notify those persons we believe would be able to help prevent or lessen the threat of harm.
- **When Required by Law:** MECCA may use or disclose PHI when a law requires that we report information if we believe there has been child abuse or neglect. MECCA may use or disclose PHI if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect, or violence. MECCA may also use or disclose PHI relating to suspected criminal activity, or in response to a court order. MECCA must also disclose PHI to authorities that monitor compliance with these privacy requirements.
- **Change of Ownership:** In the event that The MECCA Group, LLC is sold or merged with another organization, your PHI will become the property of the new owner, although you will maintain the right to request that copies of your health information be transferred to another clinician or organization.
- **Breach Notification:** In the case of a breach of unsecured protected health information, MECCA will notify you as required by law. If you have provided us with a current e-mail address, we may use e-mail to communicate information related to the breach. In some circumstances our business associate may provide the notification. MECCA may also provide notification by other methods as appropriate.
- **Psychotherapy Notes:** MECCA will not use or disclose your psychotherapy notes without your prior written authorization except for the following: use by the originator of the notes for your treatment, for training our staff, students and other trainees, to defend ourselves if you sue us or bring some other legal proceeding, if the law requires us to disclose the information to you or the Secretary of HHS or for some other reason, in response to health oversight activities concerning your psychotherapist, to avert a serious and imminent threat to health or safety, or to the coroner or medical examiner after you die. To the extent you revoke an authorization to use or disclose your psychotherapy notes, we will stop using or disclosing these notes.

All other uses and disclosures will only be made with your written authorization. You have the right to revoke your authorization at any time.

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to:

1. ensure its accuracy

2. better understand who, what, where, when, and why others may access your health information
3. make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosures to others.

### YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI

Although your health record is the physical property of MECCA, the information belongs to you. You have the following rights regarding your protected health information:

- **Right to Request Special Privacy Protections:** You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information by a written request specifying what information you want to limit, and what limitations on our use or disclosure of that information you wish to have imposed. If you tell us not to disclose information to your commercial health plan concerning health care items or services for which you paid for in full out-of-pocket, we will abide by your request, unless we must disclose the information for treatment or legal reasons. We reserve the right to accept or reject any other request, and will notify you of our decision.
- **Right to Limit the Use and Disclosure of Your PHI:** You have the right to request in writing how MECCA uses and discloses your PHI. Your request must be in writing. You can also write MECCA to end those limitations at any time. However, MECCA does not have to agree to limit the use or disclosures that are required by law.
- **Right to Request Confidential Communications:** You have the right to request that you receive your health information in a specific way or at a specific location. For example, you may ask that we send information to a particular e-mail account or to your work address. We will comply with all reasonable requests submitted in writing which specify how or where you wish to receive these communications.
- **Right to Inspect and Copy Your PHI:** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, with limited exceptions. To access your PHI, you must submit a written request detailing what information you want access to, whether you want to inspect it or get a copy of it, and if you want a copy, your preferred form and format. We will provide copies in your requested form and format if it is readily producible, or we will provide you with an alternative format you find acceptable, or if we can't agree and we maintain the record in an electronic format, your choice of a readable electronic or hardcopy format. We will also send a copy to any other person you designate in writing. We will charge a reasonable fee which covers our costs for labor, supplies, postage, and if requested and agreed to in advance, the cost of preparing an explanation or summary. We may deny your request under limited circumstances. If we deny your request to access your child's records or the records of an incapacitated adult you are representing because we believe allowing access would be reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to the patient, you will have a right to appeal our decision. If we deny your

request to access your psychotherapy notes, you will have the right to have them transferred to another mental health professional.

- **Right to Amend or Supplement Your PHI:** If you believe there has been a mistake in your PHI or that important information is missing, you may request that MECCA correct it. When you write to MECCA and explain why a correction should be made, MECCA will respond to your written request within sixty (60) days of its receipt. MECCA may approve your request, in which case we will make the changes to your PHI. Your explanation will be attached any time that your information is used or disclosed. MECCA may also deny your request. In either case MECCA will inform you in writing. MECCA's denial will state the reasons and explain your right to file a written statement or disagreement.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures of PHI:** You have a right to get a list of disclosures MECCA has made. The list will state the date of the disclosure, the person or organization that received it, the purpose for the disclosure, and the type of PHI that MECCA released. The list will not include disclosures made for treatment, payment or operations purposes; disclosures made to you, your family, or with your written authorization; disclosures made for national security purposes, to law enforcement officials or correctional facilities; or disclosures made before April 14, 2003. MECCA will respond to your request within sixty (60) days of receiving your written request. Your requests for disclosures can be for disclosures as far back as six years, unless you request a shorter time or if less than six years have passed since April 14, 2003. You may receive an accounting free of charge every twelve (12) months. MECCA may charge you a fee for any additional requests you make within a twelve (12) month period.
- **Your Right to Receive This Notice:** You have the right to receive a paper copy of this Notice or an electric copy by e-mail upon request. You may be able to view a copy of this notice at MECCA offices.

#### **MECCA RESPONSIBILITIES**

MECCA is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information
- Provide you with this notice as our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms if this notice
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restrictions
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.

#### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

MECCA may change this notice and MECCA's privacy and practices at any time, as long as the change is consistent with the District of Columbia or federal law. If MECCA makes an

important or material change to the privacy and practices policies, we will promptly post a new notice at [www.themeccagroupllc.com](http://www.themeccagroupllc.com), mail a copy to you at the address you supplied us, and/or email the notice to you if this information is provided.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OF TO REPORT A PROBLEM**

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact The MECCA Group, LLC's privacy officer (TBA).

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with The MECCA Group, LLC or the Office for Civil Rights. The address for the OCR is listed below:

Office for Civil Rights  
US Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201  
OCRMail@hhs.gov

The complaint form may be found at [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/hipcomplaint.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/hipcomplaint.pdf). You will not be penalized in any way for filing a complaint.

**Date Effective: 01/13/2014**