The Mended Hearts, Inc.
Healthcare Entities and the Mended Hearts Visiting Programs in Relation to the HIPAA – Privacy Standards

GENERAL UNDERSTANDING
We realize that each health care entity will have its own set of policies with regard to HIPAA and will have varying interpretations of HIPAA itself. Therefore, we are advising each local Mended Hearts chapter to work with their healthcare liaison, including, where applicable, a privacy officer, to ensure that policies are being followed.

MENDED HEARTS NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CHAPTERS REGARDING HIPAA – PRIVACY STANDARDS
We are advising our chapters to be active in learning and adhering to their healthcare entity’s policies regarding the HIPAA - Privacy Standards.

Local Chapter Presidents or Visiting Chair Persons should conduct the following:
• Ask to meet with the health care entity privacy officer or liaison to discuss the healthcare entity’s HIPAA policies as they relate to Mended Hearts.
• Become familiar with the health care entity’s policies and follow the rules.
• Inform the healthcare entity that the data being maintained are minimal and do not conflict with the Privacy Standards. (Please review the Mended Hearts National Office Data Requirement of the Visiting Program below. Mended Hearts does not have and has never maintained a national database of patient names or conditions.)
• Advocate that Mended Hearts volunteers join the health care entity volunteer organization, if applicable.

NATIONAL OFFICE DATA REQUIREMENTS
The only information that is maintained by the Mended Hearts National Office is the following:
• The number of visits chapter members make (how many visits were made during a day, month or year)
• Whether the visit was made to a patient or to a family member
• Type of visit (face-to-face, phone, or internet)

CONSENT FORM
A few health care entities are requiring Mended Hearts visiting programs to provide them with a consent form, which the hospital can present to the patient on Mended Hearts behalf. The Mended Hearts National office has developed the visiting consent form for your use. Please see the attachment.

However, we do not advocate implementing the consent form method unless it is deemed absolutely necessary. Visiting programs that are now operating under the health care
entity mandated consent form method have observed a significant decrease in patients being visited. Thus, less heart patients are benefiting from the needed peer support that can assist in increasing patient self-efficacy and improving the overall quality of life.

HIPAA PRIVACY TRAINING FOR VISITORS
Our goal is to have a successful partnership with you to help heart patients deal with the emotional aspects of recovery. The following procedures have been initiated:

- The National office will incorporate training for the HIPAA - Privacy Standards as part of its overall accredited visitor-training program.
- All currently accredited visitors must participate in the HIPAA privacy-training portion.
- Visitors are required to sign the Mended Hearts confidentiality form.
- Each visiting program has been informed to adhere to the healthcare entity policies and that patient confidentiality is to be maintained.
- We have also recommended that the chapters develop a "check" system to ensure that visitors are adhering to the HIPAA - Privacy Standard and take appropriate measures against volunteers who fail to comply.

RESPONSE TO PRIVACY INFRACTIONS
We understand that as the health care entity, you have the right to relinquish a volunteer from the visiting program or even close the entire visiting program for violations to the privacy standards as determined by your system.