

## Collaborating With Healthcare Staff to Improve Patient Safety, Adherence, and Satisfaction

Healthcare staff play an essential role in patient safety, adherence, and satisfaction as they interact with patients every day. However, they also can be part of interactions that may result in errors, misunderstandings, and patient complaints/dissatisfaction.

To minimize these unfortunate situations, healthcare providers need to provide their staff members with assistance, training, and strategies to help them feel empowered to optimize their patient interactions.

Well-trained staff members also will likely feel more comfortable in their day-to-day interactions with patients and their families.

The following strategies can help healthcare providers better collaborate with their staff members. By informing patients about various policies and ensuring staff follow established protocols, healthcare practices can reinforce a consistent and quality approach to care and minimize any potential liability exposure.

1

Healthcare providers should have office policies and procedures that clearly define the practice's approach to important patient situations, such as missed appointments, nonadherence to home treatment protocols and medication orders, and refusal to see consultants/specialists.

2

Healthcare providers should have an office policy that addresses unacceptable behaviors that patients/families might display. Inappropriate waiting room behavior should be addressed in that policy — from physical and verbal abuse to roughhousing — as it can compromise employee and patient safety.

3

Healthcare providers should have an office policy that addresses having weapons on the practice's property (i.e., the physical building and the grounds) to avoid staff unwittingly being put into a dangerous or contentious situation.

4

Healthcare providers should encourage their staff members to discuss difficult patient situations. It's also advantageous to practice challenging patient interactions with staff members to give them more confidence. Then, when a problem arises, the provider and staff member can discuss office policies and specific healthcare issues with the patient to reach a promising resolution.

5

Healthcare providers should give their staff members scripted remarks to use with patients and pediatric patients' parents in case they display unacceptable behavior in the healthcare practice. Scripted remarks should focus on patient safety and avoid embarrassing the patient or parent.

6

Healthcare providers and their staff members should address inappropriate behavior early. For example, if a pediatric patient's parent does not intervene at the first signs of a child's disruptive behavior, a staff member should step in. When unacceptable behavior is corrected, staff should acknowledge and commend the individual(s).

7

If patients voice frustration about completing various forms or paperwork, healthcare staff members should emphasize the importance the practice places on complying with federal, state, and local regulations.

8

Healthcare providers should advise their staff members to always focus on what is best for the patient when responding to a negative situation so it can lead to better patient understanding.

9

Healthcare providers should ask their staff members to share any important observations during staff meetings since they play a key role in identifying (a) incorrect assumptions, (b) misunderstandings, (c) unrealistic expectations, (d) refusal to acknowledge boundaries, and (e) clinical nonadherence. Then together they can discuss and agree on methods to address the behavior.

10

Healthcare providers should consider offering training programs to their staff members related to customer satisfaction and clinical standards. Many medical societies and companies offer customer service education and training options.

---

This document does not constitute legal or medical advice and should not be construed as rules or establishing a standard of care. Because the facts applicable to your situation may vary, or the laws applicable in your jurisdiction may differ, please contact your attorney or other professional advisors if you have any questions related to your legal or medical obligations or rights, state or federal laws, contract interpretation, or other legal questions.

MedPro Group is the marketing name used to refer to the insurance operations of The Medical Protective Company, Princeton Insurance Company, PLICO, Inc. and MedPro RRG Risk Retention Group. All insurance products are underwritten and administered by these and other Berkshire Hathaway affiliates, including National Fire & Marine Insurance Company. Product availability is based upon business and/or regulatory approval and may differ among companies.

© 2023 MedPro Group Inc. All rights reserved.