

## Working With Healthcare Staff to Improve Patient Safety and Experience

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

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 confident and comfortable in handling 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

Develop 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

Create a policy that addresses unacceptable behaviors from patients/families. Include inappropriate waiting room behavior in that policy — e.g., physical and verbal abuse and roughhousing — as it can compromise employee and patient safety.

3

Put a policy in place 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

Encourage staff members to discuss difficult patient situations, and 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 resolution.

5

Provide staff members with 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

Work with staff members to 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

Coach staff members on emphasizing the importance that the practice places on complying with federal, state, and local regulations, particularly if patients voice frustration about completing various forms or paperwork.

8

Advise 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.



---

Ask 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 the team can discuss and agree on methods to address these situations.



Consider offering training programs to staff members related to customer satisfaction and clinical standards to assist in their learning. 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 administered by MedPro Group and underwritten by these and other Berkshire Hathaway affiliates, including Wellfleet Insurance Company, Wellfleet New York Insurance Company, and National Fire & Marine Insurance Company. Product availability is based upon business and/or regulatory approval and may differ among companies.

© 2026 MedPro Group Inc. All rights reserved.