

Communication and Resolution Programs (CRPs)

Also known as, *Early Disclosure, Disclosure Apology and Offer or Communication and Optimal Resolution (CANDOR)* programs, CRPs focus on responding to an adverse medical outcome through prompt and ongoing communications (transparency), correction of systemic errors (patient safety improvement), and recognition of all parties' needs following the event (doing no further harm).

Process¹

- The patient/family is notified promptly following an adverse outcome and efforts are made to meet the resulting medical and psycho-social needs
- An investigation into the cause of the outcome is initiated and the patient/family receives updates throughout
- In cases of avoidable injury, a sincere apology is made
- The health professional is provided support
- Patient/family is informed of their right to have counsel and timely and fair compensation is offered when appropriate

Short Term Benefits

- Patient safety is improved as more patient safety events are reported and addressed
- The patient/family is acknowledged, helping to establish a cooperative (rather than antagonistic) atmosphere in the resolution process²
- The patient/family is provided with answers, helping to avoid litigation
- Health professional(s) involved receive support

Long Term Benefits

- Patient safety is improved via systemic changes
- Costs of resolving adverse outcomes are lowered^{3,4}
- Morale among health professionals is increased⁵
- Defensive medicine is reduced, thus lowering healthcare costs⁶
- Institutional reputation is enhanced
- Trust in the healthcare system as a whole is increased

There is no “one size fits all” solution for creating a CRP. They can be individually designed to meet stakeholders needs, however, some basic procedural guidelines should always be followed. In addition, while no special tools are needed to initiate a CRP, facilitating legislation in several states has encouraged implementation of these programs.⁷ Among the government policies that can be helpful are the following:

- Apology protections
- Maintenance of confidentiality of discussions
- Pre-litigation negotiating periods

An adverse outcome can be devastating for patients, their families, and health professionals. Implementing CRPs can help meet the needs of all stakeholders, improve the overall quality of health care, and reduce unnecessary litigation.

¹ Collaborative for Accountability and Improvement. CRP essentials, 2017. Available: http://communicationandresolution.org/pix/Collaborative_CRP_Essentials.pdf

² Moore J, Bismark M, Mello MM. Patients' experiences with Communication-and-Resolution programs after medical injury. *JAMA Intern Med* 2017;177:1595–603. 19 Gallagher TH, Waterman AD, Ebers AG,

³ Kachalia A, Kaufman SR, Boothman R, *et al.* Liability claims and costs before and after implementation of a medical error disclosure program. *Ann Intern Med* 2010;153:213–21.

⁴ LeCraw FR, Montanera D, Jackson JP, *et al.* Changes in liability claims, costs, and resolution times following the introduction of a communication-and-resolution program in Tennessee. *J Patient Saf Risk Manag* 2018;23:13–18.

⁵ Mello MM, Kachalia A, Roche S, *et al.* Outcomes in Two Massachusetts Hospital Systems Give Reason For Optimism About Communication-And-Resolution Programs. *Health Aff.* 2017;36(10):1795-1803.

⁶ Helmchen L, Lambert B, McDonald T, Changes in Physician Practice Patterns after Implementation of a Communication-and-Resolution Program. *Health Serv Res* 2016;51: 2516-2536.

⁷ Sage WM, Gallagher TG, Armstrong S, *et al.* How Policy Makers Can Smooth The Way For Communication-And-Resolution Programs. *Health Aff.* 2014;33(1):11-19.