Communication, Apology, and Resolution: Three Years of Cultural Change
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ABSTRACT

• Communication, Apology, and Resolution (CARe) is a transparent and honest way to handle adverse events in a healthcare setting. It includes communication of adverse events to patients and families, empathetic apologies, and when warranted, timely compensation for an injury caused by medical care.

• BIDMC has been using this approach since December 1, 2012, and participated in a study gathering case data for ~450 adverse events that will help us better understand the effect CARe has on case and lawsuit volume, expenditures (legal costs and damages paid to patients), and other measures.

• The study also included leadership interviews, staff interviews, and provider surveys helped us better understand CARe in practice, and where we can improve our implementation efforts for everyone involved.

RESULTS

- Screened In: 910
- Referred to insurer: 162 (16%)
- Not referred to insurer: 824 (83%)
- Insurer status not yet determined: 9 (1%)
- All pending
- 96 closed (53%)
- 814 closed (99%)

16% of cases in which the standard of care was not met and that caused the patient significant harm

LESSONS LEARNED

• Consistency is key: Data collection can help the CARe process to be rigorous; we now use a tracking mechanism that supports our algorithms, to ensure that every adverse event gets the same treatment under the CARe program.

• Everyone should be at the table: We worked hard to engage multiple stakeholders, including attorneys, in this process. Efforts to have patient meetings with attorneys included have been successful and have become an important resolution strategy.

NEXT STEPS

• We have now incorporated CARe case review into our weekly patient safety and patient relations meetings, to ensure that each adverse event is reviewed for transparency, empathy, and that the actions taken to resolve the situation correspond to our algorithms.

• MACRMI is working to develop an attorney list as a free resource to identify those attorneys who have adopted the Best Practices for Representing Patients in CARe.

• Data analysis for the 3-year study is ongoing, and publication of the data will occur over the next year.

• BIDMC and MACRMI will continue to educate staff about the merits of the CARe approach, both internally, and at other institutions across the United States.

VIDEO