



# HEAL<sup>SM</sup> A better way forward after patient harm events

**Honor • Empower • Act • Learn**

When a patient is harmed in health care, the way the health care team responds can cause additional harm—for the patient, the team, and the organization. Silence, defensiveness and denial have a long history, but a poor heritage.

*“Every hour that goes by after patient harm occurs, during which we are not effectively communicating, equates to another harm.”<sup>1</sup>*

We believe there’s a better way to move forward in the wake of an unanticipated outcome, a way that creates a path to healing for everyone involved. Constellation’s HEAL program replaces silence, doubt, fear and frustration with an honest, human-centered acknowledgement of what happened, its impact, and what to expect next.

HEAL equips health care teams to act promptly and effectively after patient harm events to achieve meaningful resolution. HEAL is based on Constellation’s 40 years of helping health care teams and their organizations enhance the way they interact with patients and families following adverse events.

1. Cited in Zimmerman, Donald L., *Person-Focused Health Care Management*, 2016, p. 172.

## The program embraces four key principles:

- ★ **H**onor everyone involved
- ★ **E**mpower each person to be part of the solution
- ★ **A**ct early and decisively to limit harm
- ★ **L**earn from each experience to better protect patients and care teams



**Constellation**  
Together for the common good.

# HEAL's four core services

1

## Clinician Peer Support

Clinicians involved in a harm event frequently struggle with reduced confidence, feelings of shame, distracted thoughts, and emotions that can interfere with their productivity and ability to continue providing safe, high-quality care to their patients. Our Clinician Peer Support Program links them with skilled peers who can help them navigate these minefields, maintain their perspective and stay connected with their passion for their work.

2

## Risk and Patient Safety Consultation

Today's team-based medicine is complex. Figuring out what contributed to a harm event and helping your organization—and future patients—benefit from that hard-won knowledge is important to helping everyone move forward. Our risk and patient safety consultants have decades of experience as hands-on nurses, malpractice defense lawyers and health system risk managers. They'll move quickly to help you focus attention in the right places and leverage your organization's strengths to problem-solve.

3

## Communication Assistance

Talking with patients and their families about what went wrong can be hard, but avoiding these conversations is worse. Research shows that communicating openly and compassionately when a harm event occurs can reduce the likelihood of lawsuits and has many additional benefits, for both patients and clinicians. We'll guide your team through communication challenges in ways that help move everyone toward healing and resolution.

4

## Expert Case Review

A humbling fact of practicing medicine is that sometimes, the standard of care isn't met. We partner with external medical experts to determine whether the standard of care was met as soon as we receive report of a harm event. If it is determined that the standard of care was not met, and that this caused the harm, we let you know right away. Options at this early stage could include an offer of compensation, well before the situation progresses to a claim or a suit, both of which lead to rapidly escalating costs (emotional, financial, and otherwise) and uncertain outcomes.

HEAL offers a better way forward after harm events ... for patients and their families, for care teams, and for health care organizations. As a Constellation client, you're already part of this better way!

**To learn more about how HEAL is here for you, email us at [HEAL@ConstellationMutual.com](mailto:HEAL@ConstellationMutual.com).**

**HEAL. A better way forward ... together.**



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