

## **Apologies Can Reduce Medical Liability Litigation**

**When healthcare providers say "I'm sorry" to patients and their families, the result is often a reduction in medical liability litigation and improvements in patient care**, according to several Michigan-based healthcare systems incorporating this practice into their daily operations. The University of Michigan Health System has saved millions of dollars in malpractice fees and has improved overall patient care quality since implementing the policy six years ago. Officials say it has improved transparency and its ethical approach to medical errors. St. Joseph Mercy Health System in Ann Arbor, Trinity Health in Novi and Henry Ford Health System in Detroit have similar apology policies in place. Henry Ford attributes its 62 percent reduction in malpractice expenses to the error disclosure program implemented in 2001. According to Chief Quality Officer William Conway, Henry Ford's annual malpractice payouts went from \$45 million to \$17 million over an eight-year period, despite a 25 percent increase in patient volume.

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