

FIVE STEPS TO RESPOND TO ADVERSE EVENTS

STEP ONE: TAKE CARE OF THE PATIENT

The priority is patient care and safety. Take whatever action is necessary to care for the patient. Notify the patient's physician. Have the physician examine the patient, and initiate tests and procedures needed to diagnose and treat the condition.

STEP TWO: DISCUSS THE EVENT WITH THE PATIENT/FAMILY/VISITOR

- Express empathy for the patient and family's pain and suffering. Remember to ask the patient's permission to discuss medical conditions and care with family members.
- Provide the patient with **all known facts**. If an evaluation of the event later leads to new or different factual information, share it with the patient.
- Do not speculate on causes or outcomes, or attempt to blame anyone involved in the event, even if you think they made a mistake or caused the problem. Wait for the results of the event analysis.
- If the situation will require follow-up, give the patient the name of a contact person at the clinic. Follow up on all promises (for information, complaint handling, etc.) and never make promises you cannot keep.
- If the patient or family wants to lodge a complaint, tell them how to do so and provide forms, if you have any.
- Never offer an opinion on how much the injury is worth or that the family should consider suing.

STEP THREE: DOCUMENT THE EVENT AND CARE IN THE MEDICAL RECORD

Again, stick to known facts without speculating or blaming. Document the discussion with the patient or family.

- Do not refer to the Quality Management report in the medical record.
- Do not place a copy of the QMR in the chart.
- Do not make a copy for your own files.

STEP FOUR: COMPLETE A QUALITY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Clinic's Role in Quality Management

These reports are confidential and should only be discussed on a "need to know" basis within the clinic. Do not photocopy this form. Do not include it in the medical record, or refer to it in the medical record. Only the white copy, which is retained by the clinic, contains names of the people involved in the incident or its analysis.

To improve the quality of care, the clinic must conduct a thorough investigation of incidents that have the potential to cause harm. Assign an individual or a committee the responsibility of analyzing all QMR.

The amount of follow-up depends on the potential for harm. The analysis should identify all causes of the event or "near miss," and action should be taken to prevent the problem from occurring again. Remember, the goal is to make it hard to make an error, easy to detect one, and even easier to respond and report.

NORCAL's Role in Quality Management

Send only the yellow copy. Please send it to the attention of the Risk Management Department at 560 Davis Street in San Francisco. Do not send it to your Risk Management Specialist. The yellow copy that you send to the Risk Management department at NORCAL contains no names. The data on the form is entered into a database, and is used to track the type of incidents. If you desire, we can send you a brief report on this data. The Risk Management Specialist assigned to your clinic can provide further assistance by researching problems, reviewing policies and procedures, and helping you identify risks and solutions.

STEP FIVE: REPORT POTENTIAL CLAIMS TO NORCAL

Whenever an incident occurs that could lead to a demand for a settlement or a lawsuit, you should notify the Claims Department at NORCAL. Do not use the Quality Management Report form to report a claim. Refer to the enclosed "Recommended Claims Reporting Guidelines" and "NORCAL Contacts." When contacting NORCAL about your account for any reason, always identify yourself as a CMIC Clinic.