

# Docs, lawyers join forces to allow doctors to apologize

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(HealthDay)—A new Senate bill allows health care professionals to make benevolent gestures without fear of these statements being used against them, according to a report published by the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

The Benevolent Gesture Medical Professional Liability Act, SB 379, allows [health care](#) providers to make benevolent gestures before medical malpractice lawsuits, mediations, arbitrations, or administrative actions, without fear that these statements could be used against them, as long as these gestures are not statements of negligence or fault.

SB 379 was introduced by Republican Pat Vance and took less than a year to pass both chambers, as doctors and lawyers were in agreement.

Attorneys suggest that the rule will be helpful to those involved in potential disputes, with apology rules showing benefits in 36 other jurisdictions.

"As physicians, it is part of our job—part of our moral and ethical responsibility—to respond to patients and families when there are less than [favorable outcomes](#)," C. Richard Schott, M.D., 2012 to 2013 president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, said in a statement. "Medicine is not an exact science, and outcomes may be unpredictable. Benevolent gestures are always appropriate and physicians should not have to fear giving them."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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