

Peer intervention program reduces patient complaints

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(HealthDay)—A physician peer intervention program is effective in improving unsafe and dissatisfying physician behaviors identified through patient complaints, according to a study published in the October issue of the *Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*.

James W. Pichert, Ph.D., from Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., and colleagues analyzed the outcomes of a peer messenger process of 178 physicians who conducted interventions for 373 physicians considered to be at high risk of unsafe and dissatisfying behaviors and performance based on analysis of unsolicited patient complaints.

The researchers found that 97 percent of the high-risk physicians received the feedback professionally. Risk scores improved by at least 15 percent among the 64 percent who responded to the feedback. Responders were more likely to practice medicine and surgery than emergency medicine, have longer organizational tenures, and engage in longer first-time [intervention](#) meetings with messengers. Among the non-responders, risk scores worsened for 17 percent of physicians and remained unchanged for 19 percent of [physicians](#).

"Peer messengers, recognized by leaders and appropriately supported with ongoing training, high-quality data, and evidence of positive outcomes, are willing to intervene with colleagues over an extended period of time," Pichert and colleagues conclude.

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