



## WHAT THE PROGRAM OFFERS

### CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Litigation Resilience Counselors will place proactive telephone calls to MPIE physicians at critical junctures during the litigation process. Generally, at the time of the report to MPIE of the event or notice to sue, at the time of depositions and again at the time of trial or settlement. There may be other times of increased stress that contact becomes appropriate. Either the claims manager or the physician themselves can make the request for contact. The focus of these calls and discussions is on education and support, not therapy. Involvement in the program is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Physicians may also access this service during times of stress not necessarily related to litigation. **To participate, contact:**

**Bob VandePol**  
**Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services**  
**Phone: 616.258.7548**  
**Cell: 616.667.7522**  
**Email: bob.vandepol@pinerest.org**



333 Bridge St NW, Suite 810  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone: 616.202.2288, ext. 1  
Email: [claimintake@mpie.org](mailto:claimintake@mpie.org)  
Website: [mpie.org](http://mpie.org)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### ONLINE RESOURCES

- Stanford Medicine Wellness Center, <http://wellmd.stanford.edu>
- Physician Litigation Stress Resource Center, <http://physicianlitigationstress.org>
- Sotile Center for Physician Resilience, <http://www.sotile.com>

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- *Adverse Events, Stress, and Litigation: A Physician's Guide* by Sara Charles, MD and Paul Frisch, JD
- *The Resilient Physician: Effective Emotional Management for Doctors and Their Medical Organizations* by Wayne M. Sotile and Mary O. Sotile
- *The Medical Marriage: Sustaining Healthy Relationships for Physicians and Their Families* by Wayne M. Sotile and Mary O. Sotile



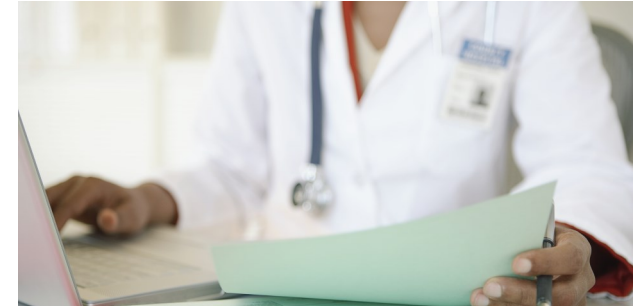
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## Physician Resilience Program

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The Physician Resilience Program provides MPIE physicians with the resources and support they need to understand and cope with the personal and professional stress experienced as a result of the litigation process, an adverse outcome, or when the stress of practice takes a toll.



## BACKGROUND

Physician burnout, stress and depression has reached near epidemic proportions according to the American Medical Association. The toll medical malpractice litigation takes on the physician and other health care professionals is the untold story in many medical malpractice cases. As the media describe the plight of patient-plaintiffs and decry the escalating costs of litigation, the involved practitioners are left to cope with emotions that may range from pain and sorrow to shame and hopelessness. Some physicians named in medical malpractice suits have left or contemplated leaving the profession of medicine, some have found solace in drugs and alcohol, and some have contemplated suicide as an escape from the isolation they experience. Those most at risk are those who try to navigate the waters of a malpractice suit without support. This program has been established to support physicians during the litigation process or when the stress of practice takes a toll. The program is coordinated by professionals who have extensive experience with physicians coping with the emotional dimension of medical malpractice and the stress of practicing medicine.

## SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

These distinct symptom clusters often arise after adverse events and during litigation because of the nature of litigation and its threat of losses, its intermittent nature, and its chronic course.

- Depression or sadness
- Loss of pleasure in previously enjoyable pursuits
- Loss of energy
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness,
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Insomnia or excessive sleep
- A change in appetite accompanied by a gain or loss of weight
- Such unexplained aches or pains as recurrent headaches
- Sexual problems especially decreased sexual interest
- Digestive complaints
- Thoughts of death or suicide

These symptoms, if they persist on a daily basis and for a month or so, may be signs of a serious depression and require professional evaluation.

## WHEN TO CALL FOR SUPPORT

All providers sometimes find that, while very helpful, the support provided by family, friends, and peers is insufficient. After a critical event, feelings of disequilibrium, restlessness, and mood change may persist and the physical or emotional symptoms that emerge may not subside within a reasonable period of time. Often, professional consultation with a personal physician or a psychiatrist or other mental health practitioner is helpful and, in some instances, imperative. If you experience any of the following, contact MPIE at 616.202.2288, ext. 1.

- When feelings of anxiety and distress interfere with daily work and relationships.
- When self-medication and excessive reliance on alcohol or other drugs are used to dampen anxiety or get a good night's sleep.
- When friends or family share observations about changes in our behavior.
- When the quality of our life and work seem significantly compromised.
- When symptoms emerge that are related to a newly developed or previously experienced physical or emotional condition.