

## WHAT HEALS CAN DO FOR YOU

Following an unexpected medical event, there is a growing awareness that healthcare providers and caregivers are emotionally impacted and may need assistance processing the event.

Research indicates that if the error was unexpected, preventable or the provider feels responsible, it has a more significant emotional impact on the provider.

HEALS is intended to help providers and/or caregivers understand their reactions, process these reactions, and get back to peak performance as quickly as possible.

When appropriate, HEALS will refer healthcare providers and caregivers to appropriate professionals for continued support.

HEALS services are available for Healthcare Services Group providers and/or caregivers in any of the following situations:

- Support is needed after an unexpected medical event;
- An event occurs that may result in a patient making a claim against the provider and/or caregivers;
- The provider and/or caregivers receives notice that the professional licensing board has opened an investigation or formal action;
- The provider or caregiver is served with notice of a malpractice lawsuit.

### Contact Information:

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(Risk Management Department)

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### HSG Family of Companies

*Missouri Hospital Plan*

*Providers Insurance Consultants, Inc.*

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**24/7 HSG Risk Management/Claims**

**Hotline:**

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# HEALS

*Healthcare Event  
Assistance & Lending  
Support Program*



**AN HSG VALUE-ADDED SERVICE  
CONFIDENTIAL AND AVAILABLE  
AT NO COST**

## After an adverse event, healthcare providers may experience an acute stress response similar to what first responders experience.



Coping with the stress and pressure of providing care to patients is an essential survival skill for healthcare providers and/or caregivers. However, the stress of an adverse event that harms a patient is a different type of stress. Reacting physically, emotionally, and cognitively to a traumatic event is a normal response to an abnormal situation. Much has been written about first responder stress, but only recently has focus shifted to healthcare professionals and/or caregivers and the stress they experience after an adverse event. HEALS shares information and resources about how other healthcare providers and caregivers have worked through the stress of an adverse event. Providers and caregivers have reported the following responses after a traumatic event:

### PHYSICAL RESPONSE

- Rapid Heartbeat
- Elevated Blood Pressure
- Cardiac Palpitations
- Muscle Tension and Pains
- Fatigue, Flushed Face, Shock Symptoms, Headaches, Grinding of Teeth, Twitches and Gastrointestinal Upset

### EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

- Panic
- Fear
- Profound Sadness
- Intense Feelings of Aloneness, Helplessness, Emptiness, Uncertainty, Anger, Hostility, Irritability, Depression, Grief and Feelings of Guilt

### COGNITIVE RESPONSE

- Impaired Concentration, Confusion
- Decision-Making Difficulty
- Short Attention Span / Forgetfulness
- Self-Blame, Blaming Others
- Lowered Self-Efficacy
- Thoughts of Losing Control
- Hypervigilance
- Intrusive Thoughts of the Event

## Healthcare Event Assistance & Lending Support

HEALS provides education and support (1) after healthcare providers and/or caregivers experience a bad patient outcome, (2) during a complaint investigation, and (3) during malpractice litigation. HEALS works with providers and/or caregivers to understand what they are experiencing and discuss what they may experience in the future. Knowledge and recognition facilitate handling the stress of an unexpected medical event.

An underlying premise of HEALS is that stress is managed more effectively if the provider recognizes, understands and anticipates his/her response to the event – KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

### INFORMATION SHARING

Sharing information and working with providers to explore how the event impacted them and how they are coping helps process the response and engages innate coping skills quicker and more efficiently.

### TALKING CAN BE DIFFICULT!

Do you know a provider and/or caregiver who is struggling after a difficult situation?

Support your colleague by sharing this information and letting him or her know that HEALS is here for them.

For a copy of this brochure or additional information go to:

### NEXT STEPS

Several months, or even years, after the event, healthcare providers and/or caregivers may receive notice that they are under investigation by a professional licensing board and/or being sued for malpractice – an experience providers and caregivers overwhelmingly describe as upsetting, humiliating and stressful.

During a lawsuit, healthcare providers and caregivers frequently relive the initial event with the added stress of knowing scrutiny, critique and examination are coming.

HEALS shares information about the investigation and litigation process along with strategies for how other providers have worked through the process. Additionally, HEALS is available to debrief with the provider after the matter is concluded.



### HEALS PROGRAM:

A VALUE-ADDED SERVICE FOR Insured Members

- Provides education & support after a bad patient outcome.
- Provides support during investigations or malpractice claims.
- Helps individuals recognize, understand, and anticipate their responses to the unexpected events.
- Provides strategies for working through the stress.
- HEALS is part of HSG's Claim Management Services, and as such, it is privileged information.