

[« Back](#) Print

---

## **Kathy Ferrell: Medical-Legal Consulting Newsletter** May 2006

---

### **In this issue**

- DELAY IN TREATMENT – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?
- WORKING WITH AN EXPERT WITNESS: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS...

### **Greetings!**

I hope that you find my newsletters helpful. I also would like to inform you of an upcoming seminar to be held on June 29 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. I will be one of the two presenters for this seminar entitled "Select Topics for Legal Staff in Alabama." Continued education credits will be offered for this seminar from the Certifying Board for Legal Assistants of the National Association of Legal Assistants and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations. For more information please feel free to contact me or Lorman Education Services. ([www.lorman.com](http://www.lorman.com)) I hope to see you and/or members of your staff at the seminar.

## **DELAY IN TREATMENT – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

---

Delay in treatment is the fourth leading cause of errors in hospitals. It has been reported in 7.6% of all errors reported to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare from 1995 – 2005. Not surprising, the most often reported cause of delay in treatment is communication. As I discussed in previous issues of this newsletter, failure to communicate can occur among all team members.

Often the patient is the first to fail to communicate. He/she has a duty to communicate to the physician or nurse complete and accurate information concerning his present and past medical condition including all medications (prescription and over the counter), alcohol, drug and tobacco history, past surgical history, family history and accurate reporting of his present signs and symptoms of illness. Failure to report this information timely and accurately can result in delays in treatment or wrong treatment.

Communication errors also occur between hospital personnel such as between physician and nurse, x- ray personnel and physician/nurse, laboratory personnel and physician/nurse and pharmacy and physician/nurse. In each case the hospital should have established policies and procedures for communication of patient information from each department to the physician, especially in the case of critical tests results. In addition each hospital should have policy and procedures for timeliness for inclusion of this information into the patient's medical record.

The second leading cause for delay in treatment is patient assessment; failure to timely assess the patient or failure to accurately assess the patient. The Joint Commission and each hospital have criteria for patient assessment on admission, daily and upon discharge. Again, treatment decisions are based upon timely and accurate patient assessments completed on each shift by the nursing staff as well as any time there is a change in the patient's condition and physician assessments performed daily and more frequently as needed.

The third leading cause for delays in treatment is a lack in the continuum of care. Delays can occur any time the care of the patient is transferred from one nurse to another (e.g., shift change), from one physician to another (e.g., covering physicians on weekends or transfer of care from one physician specialist to another) and from one facility to another (e.g., acute hospital to long term care). Caution should be taken at the end of each shift to ensure that continuum of care has been achieved. [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)

## WORKING WITH AN EXPERT WITNESS: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS...

1. Wait until the last minute
2. Hire the first person who tells you what you want to hear
3. Go bargain basement
4. Provide inadequate information
5. Ask them to back up crazy theories
6. Ignore differences between legal stipulation and scientific truth
7. Act unethically and ask them to do so, as well

[www.LAW.COM](http://www.LAW.COM)

### Contact Information

email: [kathy@ferrellconsulting.com](mailto:kathy@ferrellconsulting.com)  
 phone: 205-566-5406  
 web: <http://www.ferrellconsulting.com>

### Forward email

#### ✉ SafeUnsubscribe™

This email was sent to [kathy@ferrellconsulting.com](mailto:kathy@ferrellconsulting.com), by [kathy@ferrellconsulting.com](mailto:kathy@ferrellconsulting.com)  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Powered by



Kathy Ferrell: Medical-Legal Consulting | 1037 Blue Heron Point | Birmingham | AL | 35242