

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 20, Number 11. November 05, 2020 With Trust and Training, MSK Fosters 'Speak-Up' Culture to Address Problems

By Theresa Defino

At Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Center, Jeneeta O'Connor wears many hats. As MSK's compliance manager, her areas of focus include "controlled substance compliance, diversion prevention, patient privacy, corporate ethics and values." But a common thread among them is supporting a speak-up culture, one that fosters a feeling that workers are "psychologically safe" to report concerns.

At MSK, speaking up "is a really high priority for us," O'Connor said, and is, in general, a "key component" to ensure that its compliance program is working.

She pointed out that it is important to consider the "very real consequences"—such as "harm to patients"—that can result "when people don't speak up, when you don't have your finger on the pulse and you're not hearing about the things that are happening."

Cultivating an "environment where people come forward with...complaints, concerns or questions gives us an opportunity to intervene [at] really crucial stages," O'Connor said. Additionally, timely reporting may be required for certain incidents such as those related to patient privacy, she said.

Training employees to provide enough information so that a complaint can be acted upon is something that organizations don't always do well, said O'Connor. But it's essential to ensuring that investigations can go forward using, for example, a hotline or other valuable tool that preserves anonymity, said O'Connor during a panel discussion at the 19th Annual Compliance & Ethics Institute sponsored by the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, which publishes *RPP*.^[1]

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