



UPMC Intermediation Program

A program where patients and families get their questions answered and are treated with dignity and respect.

Your Care. Our Commitment.

Resolve Grievances and Obtain Clarity About Care and Services

As part of its commitment to excellence, UPMC recognizes the importance of offering patients and their families opportunities to voice concerns or issues that may arise during their hospital stay or doctor's office visit. In some instances, these discussions can best be held through a process called the UPMC Intermediation Program.

UPMC offers intermediation at no cost to patients and their families. Intermediation discussions are led by a mediator — a neutral third party who is skilled at bringing together patients, families, doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, and other staff members for face-to-face meetings where issues related to care and service can be openly discussed and resolved.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the UPMC Intermediation Program?

The UPMC Intermediation Program is an option for patients to resolve concerns or issues at UPMC. There is no direct cost to you. It is a dialogue between you and your health care providers. The discussion is led by a neutral third party called a mediator. It is an opportunity for you and your health care providers to sit down for a face-to-face meeting, respond to each other, and resolve concerns that you may have about care or services.

How do I know if my grievance is appropriate for the UPMC Intermediation Program?

The first step in the process is to take your concern or issue to the members of your clinical team (your doctors and nurses). If you are not satisfied with the response of the clinical team, contact the Patient Relations representative at your hospital or doctor's office to resolve your concern. The Patient Relations representative will let you know if the matter is appropriate for the UPMC Intermediation Program.

Who picks the neutral mediator to lead the face-to-face meeting?

Patients or their family members who request intermediation have the option to select 3 potential third-party mediators. From this list, 1 mediator will be assigned based on availability. UPMC has identified mediators from a variety of different backgrounds for the UPMC Intermediation Program. Their photos and brief biographies are provided in this brochure.

Who pays for the services of the mediator?

There is no cost to you. Neutral mediators are paid on a case-by-case basis by UPMC. However, the mediators are not UPMC employees and are paid only for the services they provide.

Do I need an attorney to participate?

No. However, you can have a support person go with you to the intermediation session. That person may be an attorney. If so, UPMC needs to be told in advance if your support person will be an attorney.

Features of an Intermediation Session

- Intermediation sessions are led by neutral, third-party mediators.
- Patients or their family members help to select the mediator.
- Each session is a conversation in which the mediator helps both sides communicate.
- The session is strictly confidential. The discussion is not documented (isn't written down or recorded) and cannot be used in any legal proceedings.
- During each session, mediators try to help each side find common ground.
- You and the health care providers taking part in the mediation process determine the solution to your grievance.
- All participants have an opportunity to be heard.
- Everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- The UPMC Intermediation Program is free. The program is provided at no cost to patients and families.

Neutral, Third-Party Mediators



Mary Austin

Ms. Austin has extensive experience resolving health care disputes as a health care attorney. She served as an in-house attorney with UPMC from 2000 to 2013. Her practice includes mediation, arbitration, neutral evaluation, and

health care law. Ms. Austin has a great understanding of the Affordable Care Act and conflict resolution. Prior to becoming an in-house attorney, Ms. Austin was a litigation partner at Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott in Pittsburgh. Currently, she is a member of the panel of neutrals of the American Health Lawyers Association and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.



Donald L. Baxter Jr., MD

Rev. Dr. Donald L. Baxter Jr. is a graduate of Hahnemann Medical College of Drexel University and an Episcopal priest. Through 30 years of medical practice and 14 years of pastoral care, he has a lot of experience in counseling and

conflict resolution. Dr. Baxter believes that most issues can be resolved by talking about your concerns in a responsible way.



Ann Begler

Ms. Begler has been a practicing mediator for more than 30 years. Her professional work, as a mediator, consultant, and coach, includes helping people resolve a wide range of conflicts within family systems, workplace environments, and both public and nonprofit organizations. Throughout her career in the field of conflict management, she has provided training in difficult conversations within various health care settings. Ms. Begler is a founder and past chair of the Allegheny County and Pennsylvania Bar Association's Dispute Resolution Committees. She has served as a mediator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has been the sole mediator for the Western District in the Pennsylvania Superior Court's Mediation Program, was a member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Medical Malpractice Mediation Committee, and is a member of the mediation panel for the U.S. District Court, Western District. Ms. Begler is the founder of the Begler Group, a Pittsburgh firm providing services in mediation, organizational consulting, and executive coaching.



Meredith (Merry) Bollheimer

Ms. Bollheimer is an associate professor of business and also serves on the faculty at Mercyhurst University. She has practiced in the areas of insurance defense, family law, worker's compensation, and higher education law. Ms. Bollheimer teaches courses in business law, leadership, higher education law, and interdisciplinary legal studies. Her research interests include gender studies, the legal profession, corporate social responsibility, and higher education law topics.



Sally Griffith Cimini

Ms. Cimini has mediated cases since 1999. She was trained at Harvard Law School and has completed advanced mediation training programs. Ms. Cimini serves as a mediator in disputes pending in the U.S. District Court,

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the American Arbitration Association. She is the president of the Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania and immediate past chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. Ms. Cimini is partner and chairwoman of the Employment Section of Leech Tishman Fuscaldolo & Lampl, a Pittsburgh law firm.



Lou Ann Gray

Ms. Gray has 38 years of experience as a mental health counselor and supervisor and 7 years of experience as a mediator. She has served as a faculty member in higher education and as a motivational speaker. In addition to

her private counseling and mediation practice, Ms. Gray is a mediator and IEP facilitator for the Office of Dispute Resolution in Harrisburg, U.S. District Court of Western Pennsylvania, and is a Nationally Certified Parenting Coordinator.

Ms. Gray is a member of The Association for Conflict Resolution, Pennsylvania Counsel of Mediators, Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania, and Professional Academy of Custody Evaluators.



Jerry Hogenmiller

Mr. Hogenmiller, a Pittsburgh native, has devoted his career to helping people prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts and loss. In addition to his law practice, Mr. Hogenmiller has 20 years of mediation experience providing services to families, state

and federal courts, charities, the U.S. Department of Labor, patients, hospitals, and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. When not practicing law, mediating disputes, or spending time with his family, Mr. Hogenmiller volunteers for several organizations, including the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, cancer research foundations, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, where he serves as a Board Member and Government Relations Chairperson for the Keystone Chapter. He graduated from Northwestern University School of Law and holds mediation certifications from, among others, the Harvard Law School.



Jerome Jackson

Mr. Jackson is the president of J. Jackson Consulting & Training. He has more than 15 years of mediation experience. Mr. Jackson is currently the executive director of Operation Better Block Inc. In addition to his private mediation practice, he is a

mediator with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' Office of the Victim Advocate, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Center for Victims of Violent Crimes.



Joel Pretz

Mr. Pretz has been a professional mediator since 1999, convening 100 mediation conferences each year. He provides his services for federal agencies, the U.S. District Court, and for UPMC's Intermediation Program. He is a member of the

Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania.



Deborah Robinson

Ms. Robinson is an alumna of the University of Pittsburgh where she is currently employed with the School of Social Work/Office of Field Education. Ms. Robinson has been a Licensed Social Worker since 1997 and has served as a

mediator since 2005. Her responsibilities at the School of Social Work include problem-solving techniques to assist students as they navigate through their internships. This role requires that she successfully collaborate with a wide variety of agencies.



Jared Simmer

Mr. Simmer has been a practicing health care mediator since 1986, with expertise in the medical, dental, hospital, nursing, chiropractic, and long-term care fields. He has served on various mediation and arbitration panels,

including those of the National Health Lawyers Association, the American Arbitration Association, the federal courts, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Postal Service. Mr. Simmer is an adjunct professor at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz Graduate School of Public Policy and an instructor at the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Graduate School of Business.



Orlando Portela-Valentín

Dr. Orlando G. Portela-Valentín is both an academic and a lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in conflict resolution. He has been a lawyer since 1989 and a certified mediator since 2000. He also holds a PhD in Philosophy of Law. Dr.

Portela-Valentín has served as a mediator and arbiter in many controversies, including health care, community relations, family matters, court-appointed civil and criminal matters, and employment-related and corporate controversies. He has served as a consultant on cultural competency and mediation for the Judicial Academy of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court, the Puerto Rico Bar Association, and the Puerto Rico Legal Services Corporation Pro Bono Program. He is a native Spanish speaker.

For more information about how intermediation may be used to resolve your issue or concern, contact the Patient Relations representative at the UPMC facility where you received services.

UPMC Hospitals and Physician Services

To participate in the UPMC Intermediation Program, contact the UPMC hospital where you received care and ask to be connected to the Patient Relations Office. If you received care at a UPMC doctor's office, contact the Physician Services Patient Relations Office.

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
412-692-5489

Physician Services Patient Relations
855-441-8762 (toll-free)
412-647-1923

Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC
412-641-4579

UPMC Altoona
814-889-2393

UPMC Bedford Memorial
814-623-3585

UPMC East
412-357-3800

UPMC Hamot
814-877-3767

UPMC Horizon
724-589-6240

UPMC McKeesport
412-664-2005

UPMC Mercy
412-232-7204

UPMC Northwest
814-676-7154

UPMC Passavant
412-748-6863

UPMC Presbyterian/ Montefiore
412-647-7615

UPMC Shadyside
412-623-2014

UPMC St. Margaret
412-784-4811

Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of UPMC
412-246-5201

UPMC policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, genetics, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected group status. Further, UPMC will continue to support and promote equal employment opportunity, human dignity, and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in UPMC programs and activities. This commitment is made by UPMC in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.