

It was recently reported that renowned actor [James Woods](#) resolved a long and bitter medical malpractice lawsuit against a hospital arising out the death of his brother receiving treatment there. An apology by the hospital was a pivotal event in the settlement process during a trial that ironically was in the fourth week. Kent Hospital's president decided to follow her gut and asked Mr. Woods to dinner to discuss the case - "treating a grieving brother the way she'd want to be treated herself."

Many hail the apology as a means to placate ill feelings between patients or their survivors and health care providers when injuries or death was the result of medical negligence and to avoid medical malpractice lawsuits.

Medical providers call the concept of offering apologies "[Sorry Works](#)" and encourage doctors and other healthcare providers to apologize to patients or their families when they injure or kill their patient by medical negligence. In most instances of medical malpractice health care providers are silent and evasive about medical negligence or its causes. In some cases they simply give false explanations of what happened.

Sorry Works embraces three concepts:

Step 1 - **Initial Disclosure** - is all about empathy and re-establishing trust and communication with patients and families in the immediate aftermath of an adverse event. Providers say 'sorry' but no fault is admitted or assigned.

Step 2 - **Investigation** - is about learning the truth. Was the standard of care breached, or not? It recommends involving outside experts and moving swiftly so the patient/family doesn't suspect a cover-up.

Step 3 - **Resolution** - is about sharing the results of the investigation with the patient/family, and their legal counsel. If there was a mistake, apologize, admit fault, explain what happened and how it will be prevented in the future, and discuss fair, upfront compensation for the injury or death.

It makes perfect sense that information about the event is important to patients or their families. When patients are injured by medical negligence they and their families need to know the details of the injury received including who was involved and exactly how it occurred so they can make informed decisions about the medical care they will receive for it.

Knowing the identity of everyone who caused an injury is important because it allows patients to choose whether they want the provider(s) causing the injury to continue treating them. They need to understand how the injury occurred and all the treatment options so they can decide how best they should be treated for the injury. If the patient survives the injury they need information that will help them make the life decisions that affect their ability to work, care for family or enjoy the rest of their lives. In cases of death, the survivors need to make informed decisions about how to fill the void left by the death and continue their lives as normally as possible.

Sorry Works suggests that the information gathered should be shared with patients' attorneys. Delivery of medical care is complicated and Sorry Works understands that an experienced and knowledgeable attorney is invaluable to families grappling with the legal and life decisions that go hand-in-hand with injuries or death caused by medical negligence. Even when you are being assured by health care providers that they are there to help you with injuries or death caused by their negligence, you may need legal assistance to give you an unbiased analysis of the event, your rights and options.