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PROMISING PRACTICES



Confidential Text the Owner program removes barriers to customer feedback

[Crossroads Treatment Centers \(CTC\)](#) is an outpatient healthcare organization with twelve CARF-accredited opioid treatment program locations across five states in the southeastern United States. CTC strives daily to provide a powerful, healing patient experience at each of its treatment centers, which means, in part, reducing barriers to treatment and communication. To help enhance communications with patients and promote their ongoing and continuous engagement, CTC's owner, Rupert McCormac, implemented the *Text the Owner* program in April, 2014.

With the *Text the Owner* program, a direct number to Dr. McCormac's cell phone is displayed on posters throughout each of CTC's locations. Patients or their representatives are encouraged to use the number to submit concerns and feedback freely (and anonymously, if they wish) to the head of the organization. The aim is to allow patients to present input without being subject to coercion, discrimination, reprisal, or unreasonable interruption of care and ensure that the input will be handled courteously, expeditiously, efficiently, and with timely follow-up.

Poster displayed in each CTC location to encourage patient feedback:

Brought to you by the
Behavioral Health,
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Opioid Treatment Program
customer service units at

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Volume 7, Issue 2
July 2016

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I Want to Hear from You!
Send the Owner a Text Message with
your Suggestions or Questions!
You Will Get A Reply!



Rupert J. McCormac, IV MD
Owner, Crossroads Treatment Centers

I want to hear from you. Please text me at 828-537-0961. I will get your message, but TalktotheManager.com will make sure that I never see your phone number. You can be sure that this service is **TOTALLY CONFIDENTIAL**.

TEXT the Owner at:

(828) 537-0961

Standard text message rates apply, based on your wireless plan. Learn more at talktothemanager.com

The confidentiality of the program is achieved by using a third-party service that hides the source number of a text message but allows Dr. McCormac to view the content and reply to the submitter. Dr. McCormac personally reads each text sent to the number and promptly communicates with the patient who submitted the feedback and, if necessary, appropriate staff members to provide a timely and face-to-face response (either the same day or the next day the patient is in the clinic). CTC chose the program TalktotheManager.com, but other customer feedback software tools may offer a similar feature.

Having feedback sent directly to the head of CTC cuts out unnecessary middle steps to action and holds staff members accountable to CTC's mission, values, and commitments. The program has also helped provide guidance to staff members of the expectations and guiding principles for care of patients through the example set by the owner. Staff members initially questioned whether the program might negatively affect their ability to provide care. However, it has proved to have a positive impact on the response to patient concerns. One example of the program in action is how Dr. McCormac has responded to financial hardships shared with him. On several occasions, he has agreed to give long-term patients a "scholarship" for treatment (treatment at no cost to them other than to show up and continue to work in a program of recovery).

The *Text the Owner* program is one component of a larger initiative at CTC called INSPIRE, which stands for Intuition, Nurture, Speak, Perceptions, Interdependent, Respect, and



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Empathy. INSPIRE is a guide for daily operations that defines the culture and values that should be present in interactions with patients. CTC wants to create an experience that makes patients feel valued and comfortable and an environment that is enjoyable and not threatening. The practices addressed by INSPIRE include clear communication with patients, unification of the team across disciplines, empathy, respect, and anticipation of needs. In addition to the *Text the Owner* program, the INSPIRE model is accomplished through staff trainings, morning huddles, high expectations, monthly patient appreciation days, and regular treatment team meetings. Through these approaches, CTC has seen more team cohesion, higher patient satisfaction, and an improved environment for the community and patients served.

CTC's INSPIRE and *Text the Owner* programs were awarded exemplary recognitions by [CARF](#) in a recent survey report for, respectively, leadership's guidance in the establishment of organizational mission and direction, and accessibility of leadership to persons served. For questions related to these programs, please contact Anna Gaddy, chief quality officer for CTC, at agaddy@crossroadstreatmentcenters.com or (704) 430-6495.

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