

# Information for patients

## COMMUNICATION, APOLOGY AND RESOLUTION (CARE)

Doctors, nurses and health care organizations work hard to give patients the best care possible, but, sometimes, patients are harmed during medical treatment. The injury might be the result of an error, or it might be an unfortunate outcome. Even when good quality medical care is provided, unexpected outcomes can occur.



### How the CARE model works

Organizations use Communication, Apology and Resolution (CARE) to better support patients who have been unexpectedly harmed during their medical care. CARE aims to:

- **Improve communication between health care providers and their patients.** When something goes wrong, a health care provider will explain to the patient as much as is known about what happened, and the process for reviewing the event and keeping the patient and family informed and supported. Health care providers will listen to the patient and family's concerns, answer their questions and offer emotional support.
- **Determine what went wrong and if there is a way to prevent it from happening again.** The organization's patient safety team will look into what happened and determine if the event was preventable; if so, find where things went wrong. Problems that are identified will be addressed so that another patient isn't injured by the same error. They will discuss these findings with the patient and/or family members.
- **Work together to come to a resolution.** Health care organizations commit to discussing the results of the event review with the patient and family and working toward a resolution. If the patient was seriously harmed by an error, the health care organization, working with its liability insurer, will evaluate possible compensation.

This program centers around open communication and transparency, and patients are encouraged to consult with an attorney during the process. A list of attorneys trained in CARE can be found on our website, [here](#). Patients and families do not automatically lose their right to file a lawsuit by choosing to participate in CARE.

### Health care organizations using CARE

The Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety, a Massachusetts state agency, helps organizations implement CARE throughout Massachusetts. The organizations below have fully implemented CARE.

- Atrius Health
- Baystate Health
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- Beth Israel Deaconess Milton
- Beth Israel Deaconess Needham
- Brigham and Women's Hospital
- Cambridge Health Alliance
- Milford Regional Medical Center
- Newton-Wellesley Hospital
- Sturdy Memorial Hospital

### How to report something that went wrong

While health care organizations participating in CARE regularly review patient care for errors, they welcome your help in finding them and input on ways to prevent them. You are encouraged to call your health care organization's patient relations department if you want to discuss something you think went wrong with your care.