

Information for patients

COMMUNICATION, APOLOGY AND RESOLUTION (CARE)

Doctors, nurses and other health care staff work hard to give patients the best care possible. But sometimes, patients are harmed during medical treatment. In some cases, the injury is a result of an error – something that a provider did or did not do.

Before CARE, patients would need to pursue a lawsuit to receive compensation for their injury. CARE offers another option. With CARE, providers work towards a resolution that is tailored to the patient's specific needs. This is done in a timely manner, without the delay and emotional toll of a lengthy lawsuit.

The legal system still serves an important role in helping patients receive compensation for injuries from errors. Patients do not automatically lose their right to file a lawsuit by choosing to participate in CARE. This program is centered around open communication and transparency, and patients are encouraged to consult with an attorney during the process.

How the CARE model works

Providers use CARE to better support patients who have been unexpectedly harmed during their medical care, and learn from the events so they don't happen again. The CARE model aims to:

- **Improve communication between health care providers and their patients.** When something goes wrong, a health care provider will explain to the patient what happened so that the patient is informed and supported. Health care providers will listen to the patient's concerns, the patient's questions will be answered, and the patient will be offered emotional support.
- **Determine what went wrong and if there is a way to prevent it from happening again.** The patient safety team will look into what happened and where things went wrong. Problems that are identified will be fixed so that another patient isn't injured by the same error.
- **Offer an apology, and, if appropriate, offer the patient compensation.** If the hospital or health care group's patient safety team and other reviewers determine that the patient's injury was the provider's fault, the patient will be offered appropriate compensation. Patients are encouraged to have an attorney to advise them throughout this process.



Providers using CARE

The Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety, a Massachusetts state agency, is working to bring the CARE model to facilities across the state. The providers below have fully implemented CARE.

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

How to report something that went wrong

While health care facilities participating in CARE regularly review patient care for errors, they welcome your help in finding them and input on ways to prevent errors. Reach out to your doctor or nurse, or call your provider's patient relations department if you want to report an error or discuss something that went wrong.