**UNEXPECTED MEDICAL OUTCOMES**

**Information for patients and families**

Doctors, nurses and health care organizations 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 health care facility, nurse, or doctor did (or did not do). In other cases, the injury was not preventable. It is important to remember that most treatment involves the risk of complications since medicine is not an exact science. Even when good quality medical care is provided, injury can occur.

When a medical outcome is not what you’ve expected, no matter the reason, we will ensure that you are supported both medically and emotionally. [NAME OF FACILITY] uses the Communication, Apology and Resolution (CARe) model as a framework to resolve unexpected outcomes with patients.

**Communication, Apology and Resolution (CARe) aims to:**

1. **Improve communication between health care providers and patients.** When something unexpected happens, a health care provider will clearly explain to you what is known about the event at the time and how it will affect your treatment. Health care providers will listen to your concerns, answer your questions to the best of their ability, and offer you support and resources.
2. **Look into what happened to find out if it could have been prevented, and if so, how it will be prevented in the future.** Health care organizations routinely review unanticipated harmful events. This review is done by a group of professionals and providers not involved in the patient’s care to learn why it happened. We will keep you informed throughout this process. If we find that there was something that could have been done to prevent the harm to you, we will talk with you about these findings, and take action to prevent it from happening to other patients.
3. **Offer an apology, support the patient/family medically and emotionally, and, if appropriate, offer the patient/family compensation.** We pledge to be transparent about all harmful, unanticipated healthcare events. Additionally, we are committed to supporting you and your family in any way that we can (please review the resources listed below). If our Patient Safety Team and the reviewers determine that you were significantly harmed as the result of an error, you will be offered compensation for the injury. If this occurs, you are encouraged to have an attorney advise you throughout this process.

**Contact us for assistance:**

We are here to answer any questions and support you in any way that we can. Patients and family members can contact the Office of Patient Relations at [PHONE NUMBER] or [EMAIL].

**Get emotional support:**

The **Patient and Family Peer Support Network** is a free service for Massachusetts residents. The network connects patients or their loved ones with trained volunteers who provide encouragement, support and resources to others who have a similar experience. Contact Peer.Support@BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov or call (617) 701-8271 to get started. Learn more at [BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov/Support](http://www.BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov/Support).