**Communication, Apology, and Resolution (CARe)**

SAMPLE LETTERS AND DOCUMENTATION

**Sample letter summarizing resolution conversation**\*

Dear [name],

Thank you very much for coming to our office to meet with me and [names of people at meeting]. I appreciate the time you took, but more importantly, the thoughtfulness you demonstrated as we discussed very tough issues. I hope we were able to answer your questions.

I cannot imagine how difficult [the event family member experienced] must have been for you, but I want you to know that your feedback is critical to our ability to improve. We are committed to continual improvement and the lessons from this event have not been lost on us. I would like you to consider my invitation to be videotaped so we can use your story in our continuing education efforts.

Someone at our recent meeting questioned whether [family member] should have had an EKG when he was admitted. Of course, knowing what we all know now about his heart, it would have been great to have a full cardiac workup on admission; the reality was that no one suspected that [family member’s] heart was double the normal size for a man of his age and size. To do an EKG, he probably would have had to be restrained or sedated. Both options risk other possible disastrous consequences and there was no reason to believe that he had a cardiac condition. On balance, we believe it was reasonable for our staff not to try and obtain an EKG at the time of his admission. Our reviews also suggested that an EKG alone might not have disclosed his cardiac condition.

The tougher question is whether better monitoring would have changed this very unexpected outcome. On that question, we are very conflicted. Had his nurses, for instance, checked his vital signs every three hours, it still would have been pure chance that they would have checked him precisely at the time he had his unexpected cardiac arrest. The monitoring he received included monitoring the sound of his breathing, but no one suspected that the absence of snoring meant he was in cardiac arrest. Our experts have advised us that more attentive monitoring would not likely have prevented [family member’s] unexpected cardiac arrest and death. Our conclusion is that the hidden cardiac condition was going to prove fatal to him even if our staff had done all that was reasonably expected of them.

I am sorry that [family member] died and I am sorry that you and all those who survived him have lost him. I am exceptionally sorry your loss has been compounded by care that was less-than-ideal. You had enough to cope with – dealing with gaps in his care made the tragedy that much more difficult and for that, I am sincerely sorry.

[name], [title]

\*Thank you to the University of Michigan Health System for providing these examples.