**Information for patients and families: Unexpected medical outcomes**

**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. In some cases, the injury is a result of an error — something that should not happen during care. In other cases, the injury was unexpected or unavoidable. Even when good quality medical care is provided, unexpected outcomes or unavoidable harm can occur.

When a medical outcome is not what you expected, regardless of the reason, we will ensure that you are supported both medically and emotionally. [ORGANIZATION NAME] uses an approach called Communication, Apology and Resolution (CARe) when unexpected events happen during medical care.

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

1. **Communicate with you honestly about the event, and give you the immediate support you need.** When an unexpected outcome happens, our immediate goal is to ensure that you are receiving proper medical and emotional support. It is also our goal to communicate with you about what happened, how we will care for you, and how we will learn from the event and try to prevent it from happening again. Depending on the situation, we may be able to meet these goals quickly, or it may take a longer time. Either way, we will do our best to answer your questions and support you.
2. **Take responsibility when your injury was caused by an error made in our health care organization.** It is our firm commitment to support you through this experience. We will review the event and discuss the findings of that review with you, including what we will do to correct the problem in the future if applicable. In cases of significant harm, we may recommend a referral to our liability insurer, which can provide an independent evaluation of the care to determine whether what occurred is a compensable event, i.e., whether the care was an unfortunate medical complication (no compensation), or one that was caused by substandard care (compensable). This is a claim process for which you will need to provide authorization to release your medical records. During this process, patients are encouraged to be represented by a lawyer. There is a [list of attorneys familiar with the CARe process](https://betsylehmancenterma.gov/initiatives/communication-apology-and-resolution-care/care-for-patients-and-families/care-attorneys-list) on the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety website, but you may choose any attorney to work with. You can still participate in this process without an attorney if you so choose.

**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 been harmed during care. Contact [Peer.Support@BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov](mailto:Peer.Support@BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov) or call (617) 701-8271 to get started. Learn more at [BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov/Support](http://www.BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov/Support).