

## **CARE Aims To...**

1. *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, and the patient's questions will be answered.
2. *Prevent the same injury from happening to another patient, if possible.* There will be an investigation into what went wrong by the Patient Safety Team. Problems that are identified will be fixed so that another patient isn't injured the same way.
3. *Offer the patient compensation, if appropriate.* If the hospital or health care group's Patient Safety Team determines that the patient's injury was their fault, the patient will be offered appropriate compensation and support. **Patients are encouraged to have an attorney to advise them throughout this process.**



Massachusetts Alliance for Communication and Resolution following Medical Injury

This brochure was developed by the Massachusetts Alliance for Communication and Resolution following Medical Injury (MACRMI), which is composed of members from the following organizations:

- Baystate Health
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- the Board of Registration in Medicine
- Coverys
- CRICO RMF
- Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors
- Massachusetts Hospital Association
- Massachusetts Medical Society
- Medically Induced Trauma Support Services (MITSS)

To learn more about CARE,  
please visit

[WWW.MACRMI.INFO](http://WWW.MACRMI.INFO)

## **Communication, Apology, and Resolution (CARE)**



**Working together  
to resolve  
medical mistakes  
and improve care  
for all**



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# What is the Communication, Apology, and Resolution (CARe) program?

Several hospitals in Massachusetts have started a program called “**Communication, Apology, and Resolution.**” This program is an alternative way to resolve a medical injury. When something goes wrong at a hospital or health care office, it is a more effective way for the patient to get information, support, and (if appropriate) compensation.

## How does CARe work?

The **goals** of the CARe program are:

- to support health care workers in **communicating with patients** about what happened to cause them harm and to preserve the patients’ relationship with the care team;
- to create a process for timely investigation to **prevent the same thing from happening to others** by implementing changes needed;
- to offer **apologies** for injuries that could have been avoided; and,
- to offer patients timely and **fair compensation in appropriate cases** so they do not have to bring a lawsuit.

In cases where the hospital or health care organization’s patient safety team determines that the care was appropriate and that the injury was unavoidable, patients will not be offered compensation. However, in all cases, patients will receive **a full explanation** of what happened and why.

## Why is there a need for CARe?

Even though doctors, nurses, and hospitals try to give patients the best care possible every day, patients can be hurt during medical care. Sometimes, this is because of something that a hospital, nurse, or doctor did (or forgot to do). Up until now, the usual way for a patient to receive compensation to help them through that injury has been to sue. However, a lawsuit can sometimes be difficult for both patients and caregivers. A lawsuit is often emotionally draining and can prevent hospitals and doctors from making changes to correct mistakes. Often, patients that deserve compensation have to wait years to get it or may not receive it at all.



## As a patient, can I report something that went wrong?

Yes! Please point it out to your doctor or nurse, or call the hospital’s Patient Relations team. While hospitals and health care groups participating in CARe regularly review patient care for errors, they welcome your help in finding them and your input on ways to prevent errors.

## Why is Apology part of this initiative?

Clinicians are human beings and can make mistakes. It is natural to want to apologize for making a mistake and to try to make it right. But apology has not been part of the medical culture to date — however, this is changing. Studies have found that apologizing for a mistake, just as a person naturally would, is important for the patient to hear and the clinician to say to help both of them begin to heal and resolve the problem together.

## How does this help patients?

The CARe program...

- Creates a way for patients to **get all the information** about their medical injuries in a timely manner;
- Provides a better format for patients’ questions to be answered, and helps patients **feel more in control** of the situation;
- Increases **support** for patients through patient specialists and referral groups that understand their needs; and,
- The **hospital and caregivers work with the patient**, not against them.

**It is the goal of CARe to be honest with patients about their care and to offer them the support they need.**