

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, the patient's questions will be answered, and the patient will be offered emotional support.*
2. *Determine what went wrong, and if possible, prevent it from happening again. 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 by the same error.*
3. *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 their fault, the patient will be offered appropriate compensation. Patients are encouraged to have an attorney to advise them throughout this process.*



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

Communication, Apology, and Resolution (CARe)



**Working together
when something
goes wrong;
improving care
for all.**



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 for patients who have been unexpectedly harmed during their medical care. When something goes wrong at a hospital or health care office, this program is an effective way of providing the patient with 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;
- Offer **apologies** for injuries that could have been avoided;
- Create a process for timely investigation to **prevent the same thing from happening to others** by implementing necessary changes and **continuously looking for ways to improve**; and,
- Offer patients timely and **fair compensation in appropriate cases** without having to bring a lawsuit.

In cases where the hospital or health care organization’s patient safety team and external reviewers determine that the care was appropriate and that the injury was unavoidable, patients will not be offered compensation. However, even if there is no offer, patients will receive **emotional support** and 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 every day, patients can be hurt during medical care. Sometimes, this is because of something that a hospital, nurse, or doctor did (or did not do). Before programs like CARe, the usual way for patients to receive compensation for an injury from an error was to pursue a lawsuit against their providers. CARe offers another option for patients, aims to get their questions answered, and (if appropriate) offers them compensation outside the court system. CARe attempts to provide patients fair compensation in a timely manner, without the delay and emotional toll that a lawsuit may take on both patients and clinicians.



The legal system may still serve 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 transparency, and patients are encouraged to consult with an attorney during the CARe process.

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 input on ways to prevent errors.

Why is Apology a part of this program?

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. 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.

How does this help patients?

The CARe program...

- Creates a way for patients to **get information** about their medical care or injury **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,
- Helps to ensure that the **hospital and caregivers work with the patient to meet their needs**.

It is the goal of this program to be honest with patients about their care and to offer them needed support.