

May 2001

PATIENT POWERline from the desk of Marie Savard, M.D.

RE: Thank you for your interest in taking charge of your health

Dear Friends,

Once upon a time, Americans had family doctors: white-coated figures equipped with stethoscopes, tongue depressors, and wisdom borne of complete familiarity with our medical histories - from childhood vaccinations to blood pressure medications. Today we have doctors who are time-stressed and can't possibly keep up on every detail about you. The truth is - no one can take better care of your health than you.

During twenty years as a practicing physician, I have seen hundreds of mistakes that didn't have to happen if people only knew to take charge. I am now committed to teaching people how to take charge of their health - and their families. Every month I will send you information that will help you to navigate the confusing world of healthcare and enable you to form an effective partnership with your doctor. I will share with you success stories and courtroom stories from my experience reviewing malpractice cases.

health-at-a-glance

Do you share with every doctor all your vital health information? Do you have at your fingertips knowledge of all your medical conditions, a list of medications with doses and directions - including vitamins and herbs - a list of allergies and reactions? When was your last tetanus shot? Do you need the pneumonia vaccine? Do you have a living will? Who is your power of attorney?

I have developed a form that you can use to list all this information, the health-at-a-glance form (http://www.drsavard.com/system_record_excerpt1.htm). Fill out this form and take it with you to your next doctor visit. Ask your doctor to review the information and to keep it in your medical file. Every doctor you see needs this information to help take care of you. Carry this information with you at all times, it really could save your life.

Remember mom on Mother's Day by filling out a health-at-a-glance form for her next doctor's visit!

To read more about me, the patient who first gave me the idea of patient-held medical records and the 11th grade class where I am teaching this system go to ...(<http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2001/04/08/inqmag/features/A08SAVARD.htm>) article titled "Power to the Patients."

I'll be back to tell you a real-life story next month. I welcome your stories as well. Thanks for helping me spread the word!!

Marie Savard, M.D.

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