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LAW OFFICES OF AVIV S. BLIWAS, LLC

MEDICAID PLANNING, ELDER LAW and ESTATE PLANNING

Protecting Families' Life Savings from Nursing Home Costs

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Calendar

April 3- Passover begins sunset

April 5- Easter (time to watch Charlton Heston in The 10 Commandments)

April 9- Aviv attending Harrisburg Senators opening night

April 12- Aviv participating Harrisburg Together Walk on City Island

April 18- Aviv attending lecture at Temple Beth Shalom-Jews and the Media

April 19- Aviv guest teacher at Hebrew School

April 26- Aviv volunteering at Running for Rachel at City Island

May 6- Aviv tentatively scheduled to speak at Alzheimer's Association Annual Early Stage Symposium



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Swimming in Turks and Caicos

What's New with Us

Well quite a bit is new with us. I'm back from Turks and Caicos and yes, I had a fabulous time. What a wonderful week of sun, beach, and relaxation. Good thing too because it is nose to the grindstone time for me. As I write this, we are going through quite a staffing transition. As some of you may have realized, Jennette is no longer with us. The business went through a bit of a lean time and unfortunately I had to make a really tough decision. We wish her nothing but good things and hope her thespian career takes off and we see her on Broadway one day. Meanwhile, Augusta has been offered a really wonderful opportunity for her career and so by the time many of you are reading this, she will have moved on, as well. Right now, I have someone to help me out on a temporary part-time basis until I have the time to find a really good fit. She may turn into that really good fit, both she and I have a lot of question marks right now so it suits us both to keep things temporary. I will introduce her more fully to all of you next month when it's more clear what her role will be, but mostly you guys are going to get me.

However, while I was gone, I managed to dislocate my shoulder 3 more times (honestly, I wasn't doing anything crazy—I swear)! So it looks as if that shoulder surgery is getting more and more definite. As I write, I'm waiting for a call back from the doctor to get an MRI set up so we can figure out what's going on and what the next steps are. That should only have me down for the count a few days and then it's back to work—luckily I mostly read and type all day. So even though it's about a 6 week recovery process—that's just 6 weeks until I can go back to flinging bags of potatoes around, luckily I look out for all of you with my email and my phone, not bags of potatoes.



8 Ways to be a Smart Patient



This month, as I do from time to time, I have a special guest writer. Sue Severino is a former nurse who started her own business as a health care advocate. If you've been through this or are going through it, you know how tough it is to manage doctors and medical issues, the older you get. It's tough to keep everything straight, you often don't know how different conditions or drugs interact with the other things you have going on—and for some reason most doctors don't communicate with each other and it's all up to you. And for goodness sake, you're not a doctor! That's where Sue comes in. She has the medical background to know what's what and, knowing her personally as I do, take it from me that she has the empathy, common sense and patience to explain it to you so that you can understand it and help you make informed decisions about your own health as you have every right to do. I only wish I had known her when my own parents were sick. So keep her name and number in your arsenal and reach out to her if you start getting that feeling of being overwhelmed.

Severino Health Advisors LLC

In 2006, Drs. Michael Roizen and Mehmet Oz wrote a book on how to be a smart patient. They felt it was important for patients to be active participants in getting good care. Some of their suggestions include:

- 1** Stop being passive. Remember the doctor works for you and you are the boss of your healthcare. Smart patients are more assertive and ask questions and politely challenge what they don't understand.
- 2** Make a list of questions before you see your physician. Patients who are prepared for their visits and ask questions will have a better understanding of their health condition. Also consider bringing along a family member to your visits to help you remember what was discussed at the visit.
- 3** Know your family history to determine if you have any risk factors for genetic or family related conditions.
- 4** Bring a list of all your medications to all medical appointments. This helps to avoid duplications of medications and possible drug to drug interactions.
- 5** Get your medications from the same pharmacy and become friendly with your pharmacist. Consultations are free and pharmacists have a wealth of information about drug side effects, drug to drug interactions, and ways to reduce drug costs.
- 6** Understand how to take your medications. It is important to know the following:
 - What is the medication treating?
 - Does it replace anything else you are taking?
 - How do you take it - should it be taken at a certain time of day, on an empty stomach, or with food?
 - How long will you be taking the medication?
 - What are the common side effects?
 - Is it safe to take with my other medications?
- 7** Stop playing the waiting game. Ask when a test result is going to be available and call the office that day to get the results. Don't depend on the office to call you with results in a timely fashion or to notify you when your test results are abnormal.
- 8** Keep a copy of your medical records and sign up for patient portals to get copies of the most recent lab tests, office notes, or x-ray reports.

Severino Health Advisors is an independent health advocacy company that will help you navigate the challenges of a new or existing health-related condition. To learn more about how we can help, go to www.SeverinoHealthAdvisors.com or call for a free 15 minute phone consultation at 717-561-2720.