TOOLS FOR PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

MEDICAL VISIT COMMUNICATION

- make a list of your symptoms and concerns
- make a list of the medications that need new prescriptions
- bring a list of all current drugs (carry at all times)
- describe pain using the scale of 1-10
- explain how problem impacts your daily life
- discuss with doctor before you begin whether you should have someone accompany you to hear what is being said (sometimes the pain and/or medication makes it difficult to comprehend)
- if undergoing tests, ask when you will get the results and check back if you do not hear from the doctor's office
- confirm that you can call the office and physician will return your call if problems arise
- find out from the staff when the doctor usually returns his calls
- do not save **major concerns** for the end of your visit (i.e. I've been having this pain in my chest for a few days)
- be honest with doctor if you are not following his/her instructions (taking your medication, going to therapy etc.)
- ask questions **(there are no stupid questions)**
- bring a pen and paper and take notes

MEDICATION QUESTIONS

- What are common side effects?
- Why is it necessary?
- What should I do if they occur?
- Does it interact with any of my drugs or over the counter medications?
- What if I miss a dose?
- How long before I should start seeing results.
- When should I contact you if the drug does not help?

CURRENT INFORMATION

- personal information, emergency contacts, after-hour numbers for key doctors
- medical emergency ID tag (e.g. Medic Alert) medications including over the counter
- allergies (food, medication, substances)
- medical history including surgeries, diagnoses, tests, treatments, immunizations
- family medical history
- lab results, test results
- important health 'numbers' (blood pressure, weight, cholesterol)
- copy of health care proxy/living will, medical disclosure forms
- copy of medical records esp. if you have moved
- copies of x-rays, scans, and other important diagnostic films and reports