

# Preparing for Your Doctor's Consultation



## Who Could You Be Meeting With?

It could be your first meeting with the doctor, a follow up visit or a visit for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> opinion, clinical trials coordinator, or it could be a visit with anyone on your Integrative Care Team such as:

**Neuro-Surgeons:** Surgeons who specialize in removal of brain tumors and the nervous system

**Neuro-Oncologists:** Doctors who specialize in brain tumors and the nervous system

**Radiation Oncologists:** Doctors who use radiation to treat cancer

**Oncologists:** Doctors who treat cancer

**Neurologists:** Doctors who specialize in brain disorders

**Rehabilitation/ Occupational Specialist:** A healthcare professional such as physical therapist or occupational therapist who helps people recover from an illness or injury and return to daily life.

**Social Worker (MSW):** A Social Work professional licensed by the state who helps patients to obtain needed resources and facilitate interactions of the patients with and between care teams and community resources, as well as family interactions.

## Why Is It Important To Prepare?

- Makes the consultation much more valuable for everyone
- Doctors get all the information they need in ADVANCE to understand your tumor and recommend best treatment options for you
- You have the opportunity to have all of your questions answered
- Improves communications/ understanding / decision making, helps the doctor understand and you want to be involved in your care
- Preparedness and knowing in advance what to ask (TOP 10 Vital Questions) leads to enhanced quality of life and survivorship & immediate access to advanced treatment options

## Planning your Visit

- Find out what is required in advance from the doctor's staff
- Are there Items to forward in advance (confirm with Doctor's office) such as, A CD of all prior brain imaging and medical records
- Be aware of any pre-appointment restrictions. At the time you make the appointment, be sure to ask if there's anything you need to do in advance, such as restrict your diet.
- Write down any symptoms you're experiencing, including those that may seem unrelated to the reason for which you scheduled the appointment
- Write down key personal information, including any questions or concerns
- Prepare a detailed personal medical history and your family medical history document including a list of all medications, vitamins or supplements that you're taking
- Consider taking a trusted family member or friend along. **Sometimes it can be difficult to remember all the information provided during an appointment.** Request them to take accurate notes during the doctor visit
- Be familiar w/tape recorder or voice recorder on your phone so what you can record instructions and commitments made during the doctor's appointment

## Items You Should Bring With You or Send in Advance

- Get a notebook
- Write down all questions to ask your doctor
- You may be asked to send in Advance
  - A CD of all prior brain imaging (MRI'S CT Scans, medical records previous doctor contact info etc.)
  - Pathology and imaging reports
  - Any notes on treatment so far
  - Clinical notes from neurologist and neuro- oncologists
  - A patient demographic sheet including their personal information (DOB, SS number, address, phone, etc.)
  - A copy of the front and back of the patient's medical insurance card
  - Patient's Family Doctor/Primary Care Physician and other provider's names and locations.
  - Health insurance information including insurance card(s), special forms, referrals or important phone numbers, Health Directives/Living Will
  - Any additional medical records not already sent in advance of the visit

- Be prepared to wait for doctor's appointment running late. Consider bringing a book, notecards, laptop to work on while waiting. TIP: schedule doctor appointment in the morning to decrease wait/running late time.
- Call ahead to check to see if scheduled appointment w/doctor is running late. Arrive early (**so that you have enough time for the necessary testing and paperwork**). Be prepared to wait for doctor's appointment running late. Consider bringing a book, notecards, laptop/tablet to work on while waiting.

### During the Doctor Visit

- Discuss additional needed testing, such as blood work, MRI's, PET scans, use of Gliadel Wafers at time of surgery, consent forms for Clinical Trials, advanced treatment options.
- Review your Doctor's recommendations to make sure you understand. Repeat doctor's recommendation back to the doctor and make sure you understand it and write it down.
- Use your notebook and take notes. Ask questions and make sure that you write down all the responses in note book
- Discuss whether a clinical trial is an option for you and will the doctor help you set into a clinical trial even if it is not enrolling/ offered at the doctor's location
- If this visit is for a second opinion:
  - You need to understand this doctor's recommendation and if/why it is different or the same as the initial opinion.
  - What is the recommended treatment plan? Ask for recommended treatment plan in writing. You should understand the overall path, if not all the details prior to leaving
  - Discuss your "Plan B" if and when tumor returns: additional surgery, treatment/ chemo, Medical devices such as Optune™, clinical trials, genomic testing/ DNA sequencing, etc.

