Annual Checkup Fatality File

In 2002 James lost his 19-year-old son after he collapsed while running. He had been diagnosed with a heart arrhythmia by a cardiologist a few weeks prior and was released from the hospital with instructions not to drive for 24 hours.

“His death certificate said he died of a heart arrhythmia,” he said, but my son really died as a result of “uninformed, careless, and unethical care by cardiologists.” He explained: “If you have a patient with heart arrhythmias of a certain level and low potassium, you need to replace the potassium, and they did not. And they didn’t tell him he shouldn’t go back to running.” Communication errors, he said, are “unfortunately very common.”

In 2014 James retired early to devote his life to improving patient safety. His mission: to teach people how to be empowered patients. He has created a patient bill of rights, which he’s been pushing to become federal law. Yet so far he said his letters to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have gone unanswered.

James’ site, Patient Safety America, lists the three levels in which patients can protect themselves. These include being a wise consumer of health care by demanding quality, cost-effective care for yourself and those you love; by participating in patient-safety leadership through boards, panels and commissions that implement policy and laws; and by pushing for laws that favor safer care, transparency and accountability.

These situations with people stretch to every age. Young and older nature people need check-ups from time to time.

Certainly, annual check-ups fall with – in this purview. If this young man, had a check – up perhaps he would be alive today.