



Thursday Memo – March 5, 2015

Tears by Kathy Maier

Fighting back tears as I sat in my office with the 4 of them. I was the only teary eyed person in the room. I expected this though. I knew the family, I knew their demeanor. I knew what to expect. I knew the phone calls I would be getting in the upcoming weeks. The crying on the phone. But today they were stoic. Not me, I could feel the tears coming.

Confusion. He looked so confused. I knew it was because of the lesions. This was not him. He kept repeating himself. He didn't understand, but pretended he did.

Attentive. She had her little notepad, writing every word I said down. This was how she was. She hid behind knowledge.

Stoic. His two young adult children just sat there. Trying to be stoic for their parents. I knew I would hear from the oldest in a few days. I knew I would not hear from the youngest. Note to self to call her in a week. She would never ask for help.

Family. All I could think was, he will never get to walk them down the aisle. He will never get to hold his grandchildren. Fighting back the tears...

Bad news Friday is what we call it. Always come on a Friday. This time before a long weekend. Fortunately, I was on call.

Multiple calls. Confusion worsening. Blood sugars uncontrolled. Won't take his insulin. Scared for their lives. Hid all the knives. ER sent them home.

Tuesday came. Saw 2 neurosurgeons. Both said same thing. He was admitted. Awaiting biopsy. Didn't look good. Condition worsening quickly.

Oldest child called, crying hysterically, can't take it, doesn't know what to do.

Wife called again, still attentive, still trying to hold it together... Still haven't heard from the youngest, I should call her... They have each other, that gives me comfort...

Now I sit back and I look at the situation. I analyze like I always do. This is the good and bad of family medicine. The good is I know the family well enough that I can take care of all 4. The

bad is, when you give bad news, you don't have just 1 patient, you have all 4 patients to worry about.

Tears, flowing down my cheek...not stopping...but I know that they all will get the best care because I am their doctor and I know them and the situation....