

One container, in one fixed place, holding what a paramedic, a substitute caregiver, or a relative arriving from out of town would need in the first ten minutes. Responders in many areas are trained to check the refrigerator, so that is the convention worth following. Put a card on the fridge and one on the inside of the front door saying the information is there.

Everything in this box is knowledge that otherwise lives in one person's head. The box exists for the day that person is not there to be asked.

DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Copy of the healthcare power of attorney
- ☐ Copy of the advance directive or living will
- ☐ Copy of a signed HIPAA authorization
- ☐ Copy of the durable power of attorney for finances
- ☐ A note saying where the originals are kept and who holds copies
- ☐ Insurance cards: health, Medicare or Medicaid, supplement or Advantage
- ☐ A recent photograph, dated on the back

MEDICAL

- ☐ Current medication list with doses and times, dated
- ☐ Allergies, and what reaction each one causes
- ☐ Ongoing conditions, and roughly when each was diagnosed
- ☐ Implanted devices: pacemaker, defibrillator, stent, joint replacement
- ☐ Recent hospitalizations, and what changed as a result
- ☐ Primary care doctor, specialists, and pharmacy, with numbers
- ☐ Preferred hospital

PEOPLE

- ☐ Next-of-kin call list in order, with relationships and numbers
- ☐ Which person on that list is the healthcare agent
- ☐ Who has keys to the house, and where a spare is kept
- ☐ A neighbor who can get in
- ☐ Who to call about the pets

THE PART MOST BOXES LEAVE OUT

A responder can read a medication list. What they cannot do is guess any of this.

- ☐ Can this person reliably answer questions about themselves? Say so plainly.
- ☐ How they communicate if they cannot
- ☐ What settles them when they are frightened
- ☐ Anyone who depends on this person and cannot be left alone, including a spouse
- ☐ Pets in the house, and what they need
- ☐ Where the full Family Care Notebook lives

WHERE THE BOX LIVES, AND WHO KNOWS

Duplicate kept in:

Contents last reviewed on:

Review it whenever a medication changes, after any hospitalization, and twice a year regardless. A box nobody has opened in three years is worse than no box, because somebody will trust it.