

**Askvig, Joshua J.**

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**From:** marilyn worner <wornermarilyn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2015 12:41 PM  
**To:** Askvig, Joshua J.  
**Subject:** Next week  
**Attachments:** AARP Caregivers.docx

Josh,

Mike and I are sorry to tell you that we will be unable to be in Bismarck next week. Our son is still visiting from Wash. D.C. , and along with several other commitments, we feel that we cannot go.

However, I have attached a "story" of our experience with after care and would be happy if someone could share it with the committee. I hope that it will be of some help.

We wish you the best- -and appreciate all of the work that you do.

Please let us know if you receive this message.

Thanks,

Michael and Marilyn

## **AARP Caregivers Information:**

**To begin, I would like to make it abundantly clear that both my husband and I, who live in a rural North Dakota community, are happy and thankful to have the wonderful health care facilities, doctors, nurses, and hospital that we have!**

Recently, my husband had "reverse shoulder replacement" surgery in Fargo. The surgery occurred early one morning and my husband was told that he could possibly go home the next day. The surgery went well, the surgeon met with me when he was done and gave me some aftercare information. He said that either he or another doctor would see my husband the next day to be sure that he was ready to go home. The care in the hospital was excellent- - each of the staff, nurses, etc. who we met were helpful, cheerful, and appeared to be very competent. We saw a physical therapist and an occupational therapist. The physical therapist did some minimal exercises with my husband to work on when he arrived home and said that she would see him again the next day before he left the hospital.

On the morning after my husband's surgery, a businesslike nurse came into our room and announced that she was discharging my husband. I was immediately panicked because we had not yet seen a doctor to check on my husband's progress, had not been given any directions for after care, nor had we seen the physical therapist. I told the nurse that we were supposed to see a doctor and a physical therapist first and she agreed that she would wait, though she said again, that her orders were to dismiss us.

A short time later an intern came in to see my husband and after completing his examination said that my husband could go home. We asked him some questions about care at home and he gave us some instructions for care at home. The physical therapist came later and again showed us exercises to do at home. Later, the nurse came in and completed the discharge papers and gave us more oral and written instructions- - - some that conflicted with the doctor's orders. She printed the discharge papers and we went home. When we got home, we read the papers and found some more "orders" that were again different from the first two.

**One of the big questions where we received conflicting orders was the care of the large incision: one said that the steri-strips that were on the incision under the huge bandage were sufficient to leave on during a shower, etc. The next one said to keep the incision bandaged for several days especially during showers, and another one said just to not let water run directly on the incision when showering. Nobody told me what type of bandage to use and/or where to get it. My final decision on how to treat the incision was answered when I called my next door neighbor after we arrived at home. She was a registered nurse whose husband had the exact same surgery about nine months earlier. She told me exactly what materials to get and how to cover the incision when showering. I had already gone to the local drug store and purchased several rolls of different**

**kinds of tape so after talking with my neighbor, I returned them all and purchased a different type!**

During the first few days after the surgery, my husband had a problem with swollen legs and ankles. We called the doctor's office in Fargo and, of course, had to leave a message. We received a return call several hours later. In the meantime, I had looked on the internet (which, as you all know, was a huge mistake!). While waiting and worrying, I called our local clinic and, thankfully, they were able to help me.

I realized as I struggled with how to care for my husband's incision, that during the five days after my husband's surgery, that he was still feeling the effects of his anesthetic and actually did not remember any of the directions that we were given during the entire process. So he was not able to help me either!

**In summary, we struggled in the early days of my husband's recovery, and would have been in a much better state had we received clear and concise directions before we left the hospital, not conflicting ones from each person we encountered while there.**