

**New Audio Podcast Provides an Insider's View of the Healthcare System**  
*Healthassist Podcast now available on iTunes*

(Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA—August 3, 2009) As the contentious debate over healthcare reform rages on in Washington, patient advocates like Dianne Savastano, MBA, BSN, can't help but feel optimistic change really is on the way. With over 25 years of experience in the industry—she's done everything from providing direct patient care to holding senior positions in hospital administration and insurance—Savastano knows a sad truth about the current healthcare system. "Most consumers today don't fully understand how it all works. They're experienced with routine well visits and even urgent care, but when a condition or diagnosis requires more than one physician or the services of a specialist, that's when things get complicated," Savastano explains. "If they are seriously ill or in crisis, the system can be completely overwhelming."

Savastano should know. As the founder of Healthassist, a healthcare consultancy based north of Boston, she's among a growing number of advocates in America and was recently featured in a National Public Radio story on the subject. At a time when financial advisors, attorneys, and travel planners are commonplace, Savastano has identified her own niche: assisting individuals and families who want *or need* to be more active participants in their own healthcare. Sometimes she's a teacher, explaining medical technology and Medicare reimbursement guidelines. Other times she's an advocate, attending physicians' appointments and taking notes in plain English. Often she's the calm voice on the other end of the line, offering reassurance, guidance, and outlining next steps for her clients.

"Even when people are able to access the system, they don't fully understand the process," Savastano says. "An unexpected healthcare crisis can consume an entire family. And when you factor in that most patients don't speak the same language as providers," she explains, "you quickly understand that what we really need is more education and advocacy on the patient's behalf."

Following years of providing advice to clients one-on-one, Savastano is now sharing her insider's knowledge of the healthcare system through a new, free audio podcast called Healthassist. In 20-minute reports, Savastano shares practical advice consumers can use immediately to impact their healthcare experience. Topics for the first few episodes include: making the most of your visit to a primary care physician, identifying and communicating with a specialist, preparing for and managing an inpatient hospital stay, and researching skilled nursing facilities.

(more)

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Future episodes will include interviews with healthcare and insurance professionals, elder law attorneys, estate planners as well as patients and their family members. Story ideas and questions may be submitted through the Healthassist Web site at <http://healthassistcorp.com>.

To subscribe to the Healthassist podcast, visit the iTunes Store and search for “Healthassist” or visit the podcast page on the Healthassist Web site <http://www.healthassistcorp.com/podcasts>. Users will also find the Web site offers several helpful tips on how to better manage their own healthcare or the care of a loved one.

*Editor’s note:* Dianne Savastano, Healthassist founder and president is available for media interviews.

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