KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. Learn the symptoms of HF and don’t be afraid to ask the doctor questions. A better understanding of HF helped our family become comfortable talking about my mom’s condition with her care team (doctors, nurses, family and friends).

A TEAM EFFORT! My Mom and I know it takes a team to tackle HF. Remember to work as a team with your loved one’s doctor, as well as the rest of the care team. Check out this list of important questions to ask at your doctor visits: https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/documents/downloadable/ucm_484199.pdf

FIND JOY IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY! Encourage your loved one to work with their doctor to find a physical activity they can enjoy. It can be as simple as walking around their neighborhood or gardening!

COMMUNICATE OBSTACLES. Whether mom’s having difficulty sleeping or just feeling plain exhausted, I always remind her to share everyday challenges such as fatigue or shortness of breath with her care team.

BE OPEN AND HONEST with family members and others on the care team about any issues your loved one is facing. Having an open and honest dialogue brings us one step closer to better managing HF.

KNOW WHEN TO SAY “NO” for the good of your loved one. Mom is a candy and salt lover, and I had to learn how to say “no” when she wanted to eat certain foods. At first my actions were met with resistance, but she knew I was trying to help her manage her condition properly.

CAREGIVING IS TRIAL AND ERROR. Learn from your past experiences and adjust as you find new things that make life easier on you and your loved one.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF and maintain your own diet and exercise! As a caregiver, I always remind myself to talk about my feelings with family or friends, whether I’m acknowledging, “that was a rough one” or “OK, that was a good day.”

VISIT RISEABOVEHF.ORG. Check out tools to help you and your loved one manage HF, including a helpful self-check plan that reminds you of the important times to check in with your doctor: https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/documents/downloadable/ucm_477328.pdf

JOIN THE SUPPORT NETWORK on the RiseAboveHF.org website. Mom and I have found it’s comforting to know there are other families going through the same situation.

QUEEN LATIFAH’S TOP 10 CAREGIVING TIPS

1. When my mom was diagnosed with heart failure – a condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body – it was a scary time for our whole family. As I learned more about it, I was able to identify signs and help her manage the symptoms of HF, and I felt a stronger sense of empowerment to guide and support her. I want to share what I’ve learned along the way, to help other HF caregivers. Together, let’s Rise Above HF!

2. Find out more about heart failure and your options by visiting RiseAboveHF.org. It’s an informative, interactive workbook to help your loved one manage their HF.

3. About 915,000 new patients are diagnosed with heart failure every year. About 50% of heart failure patients die within five years of being diagnosed.

4. 1 in 5 Americans will develop heart failure in their lifetime.

5. Visit RiseAboveHF.org to find this helpful self-check plan.

6. Over 915,000 new patients are diagnosed with heart failure every year. About 50% of heart failure patients die within five years of being diagnosed.

7. When your loved one is diagnosed with heart failure, it’s important to understand the symptoms and how to manage them. The RiseAboveHF.org website offers a helpful self-check plan to remind you of the important times to check in with your doctor.