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Taking Charge

By his own admission, **Michael Weiss** does not “do” passive well. A founder of Keevican Weiss Bauerle & Hirsch, a Pittsburgh law firm, he’s been involved in major business transactions throughout the world, in places like Buenos Aires and New York City. Sitting back and letting others look after him simply isn’t his style.

But Mr. Weiss has another, even more important, reason to manage his own health — and his diabetes. As former chairman of the American Diabetes Association, he’s toured the United States, meeting people whose health and finances had been devastated by the long-term effects of not controlling the disease. As a member of the Pennsylvania Governor’s Chronic Care Commission, he’s helped shape the standard of care in the state.

“In diabetes, there is no avoiding becoming active,” he says. “This is a self-managed disease, and I’m the self: plain and simple. No one can be there to do it for me.”



Mr. Weiss’ attitude dovetailed nicely with his care at UPMC, he says. Specialists at UPMC had pioneered and done much of the research groundwork to prove the value of intensive self-management. Key to that approach, they found, was high-quality education that empowers patients to take an active stance in controlling their blood sugar, blood pressure, and other risk factors. The effort pays off in fewer life- and limb-threatening diabetes complications down the road.

“I’m in the center of the team,” Mr. Weiss says. “And as the quarterback, when you throw the ball, you have to believe ... that your receiver is there to catch it. And fortunately, I believe that my team members are the best I’ve seen; and I’ve seen quite a few around the world.”