Picture: ALLEN BEREZOVSKY/GETTY

Joan's heartache over Jackie

SISTERLY ADVICE: Dame Joan and Jackie in 2015

DAME Joan Collins has said sister Jackie "did the right thing" by not telling her about her cancer diagnosis.

But the legendary star also says the novelist did "the wrong thing" by not going for a mammogram earlier.

The Hollywood actress, 88, best known for starring in the US soap Dynasty, said her younger sibling had wanted to avoid being pitied.

Appearing on tonight's Piers Morgan's Life Stories, Dame Joan said: "I think in that respect she did the right thing... But I think she did the wrong thing because I had been telling her for years, you have to go and have a mammogram.

"Finally she was dragged there by Tiffany her daughter and that is when he said 'You have got stage four cancer'."

Jackie died of breast cancer in 2015 aged 77.

● *Piers Morgan's Life Stories with Joan Collins, ITV, 9pm*

The doctor won't see you now...

Older patients frustrated by remote care

By **Tony Whitfield**

A MAN worried about a mole was told by a doctor to send a picture of it. A woman who insisted on seeing a doctor, rather than a nurse, was made to wait three weeks for a phone consultation.

One man with a potential heart defect had his appointment cancelled, was speculatively prescribed medicine and only received a telephone consultation five weeks later, after repeatedly asking for a GP appointment.

And another patient found out her NHS physiotherapy appointment was merely a phone call and a link to online exercises, while others were told they could only get repeat prescriptions if they downloaded a telephone app.

Silver Voices said these were just some of the experiences of their members after trying to get face-to-face consultations with their family doctor.

The campaign group for the over-60s said many illnesses cannot be diagnosed remotely, it was risking the health of older people and was also discriminatory, as many were unable to use, or uncomfortable with digital technology. A poll found 71 per cent of its members had difficulties in obtaining an appointment this year, with GP practices urging patients to consult nurses, or only offering telephone or video consultations.

Initial diagnoses in many practices are now being decided by practice nurses, pharmacists or even receptionists, who are now called "care navigators", it added.

Silver Voices has launched a petition calling on the Government to create "a legal right" to see a doctor in person.

It argues the pandemic has been used to push for more remote consultations while members fear being able to see a doctor in person may be a thing of the past.

One member, "Julie", from Flintshire, said: "Adverts on TV saying you can now see your doctor – fat chance of that! I know they have been giving Covid jabs but everything else has gone out of the window.

"I'm afraid that this is how it's going to be in the future and we'll never be able to see our GPs face to face again."

Charity director Dennis Reed said: "Silver Voices is determined to save the doctor/patient direct relationship.

"Remote consultations and diagnoses by other practice staff are inherently risky and discriminate against older patients.

"Some conditions cannot be diagnosed at all without the physical proximity of the doctor.

"Many older people are uncomfortable or ill-equipped to describe their symptoms over the phone or by video conferencing."

He added: "We recognise that funding is an issue at all levels of the NHS, but the answer is not to cut corners in this unsafe way.

"We are calling on all the governments of the UK to enforce the right of patients to see their doctor confidentially, and in person, if such a consultation is requested."

To sign the petition visit: silvervoices.co.uk/campaigns/

A show of hands from our members.
A show of support for Shelter.

Each year at the AGM, we give our members the chance to have a say in how we do things. It's a tradition that helps us keep the Society and what it's all about. This year, for every vote cast, we'll give £10 towards Shelter up to the amount of £50,000. We've supported them since 2001, working hard to end the older community that always has and spent time in our lives. Like Shelter, we believe everyone should have a place they can call home.

Look out for your voting pack in the post or email, then use your rate or nationwide.co.uk/AGMvote

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