



# THE PATIENT'S ADVOCATE

A Quarterly Update from a National Leader in Home-Based Medicine



*Terri Hobbs moments after being honored by the Housecall Providers staff.*

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## Farewell to a house call champion

It's a handful of people across America who have worked tirelessly within the last two decades to bring the house call back from near extinction. Among the members of that elite group: Terri Hobbs.

The former executive director of Housecall Providers gave her blood, sweat and tears the last 16 years to ensure that, above all else, home-based medicine would survive in Portland. There were years when it seemed that desire would only be a dream amid the uncertainty of public and private support.

It was then that the organization's resilient spirit shined forth.

"When it appeared that we were in our final hour, something would always come along that ensured we would live to fight another day," says Hobbs. "A grant would come through, a large bequest, or that long-awaited check."

"I am so humbled by the sacrifices made by staff to keep our mission alive," says Hobbs. "Early in the 2000s, when we ended two fiscal years significantly in the red, we had to ask ourselves the hard question, 'Can we continue?' and the answer was always a resounding 'Yes!'"

According to Hobbs, what she is most proud of is the impact that Housecall Providers has had locally as well as nationally.

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## The best care starts with strong relationships

As a child, Kristi Youngs, BSN, RN, CHPN, knew that when she grew up she either wanted to be a nurse or a ballerina.

While she would have made a great ballerina – tall and graceful, with a sunny personality that belies a surprising competitive streak – ultimately, it was the prospect of connecting with people one on one that led her to the field of nursing.

“I realized that there’s a big part of me that really values relationships and taking care of people,” says Youngs.

Today, as clinical operations director for the



*Kristi Youngs, BSN, RN, CHPN*

Housecall Providers Hospice and Palliative Care programs, her focus on relationships serves as the foundation for her philosophy of care.

“To provide good care, especially good palliative care, you need to create relationships that are strong enough for patients to feel comfortable articulating what they want,” says Youngs. “Some people want aggressive treatment, others want comfort care. The care we provide should reflect whatever a patient and family feels is best for them.”

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## Emerson House and Housecall Providers: trusted partners in care

For over a decade, Housecall Providers has been offering the residents of Emerson House home-based primary care and hospice services. Memory care communities, like Emerson House in SE Portland, were created solely to serve the needs of people with Alzheimer’s disease and other medical dementias. In addition to those diagnoses, many of their residents suffer from other medical conditions that can further impact a resident’s quality of life. Enter Housecall Providers.

“Housecall Providers continues to be an integral part of our team-based approach to care,” says Emerson House Executive Director Erin Jones. “Letting families know that a service like this exists and that their loved one can receive in-home medical care seems to take the stress levels down that much more.”

Jones knows the value of providing in-home medical care to people with dementia. She says that residents behave differently when they are transported from their familiar space, and sometimes after a trip out it may take days to get them back into their normal routines.

Currently, Housecall Providers has 16 patients living at Emerson House, and all are seen by nurse



*Members of the Emerson House leadership team: (l) Executive Director Erin Jones, Residential Care Coordinator Gordana Hrvic and Director of Wellness Julia Schon, MSN, RN.*

practitioner Aurora Curelaru, FNP.

“Aurora can make what I believe to be better medical decisions for our residents because she sees them in their environment. Frankly, on occasion she can see something environmentally that we do not see because we are here every day,” says Jones.

The staff and administration at Emerson House really appreciate the professionalism and efficiency that each Housecall Providers clinician demonstrates when they visit the facility.

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# Connection key to living with COPD

According to Gloria McClain, the period before receiving support services from CareOregon was one of the loneliest and darkest times of her life.

“For a long time, I didn’t think anyone was listening, and that is what scared me the most,” says McClain, “No one knew my story, and I wanted others to know that you can get past hardships, no matter how many times you fall, you can get back up.”

McClain, 68, who suffers from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), is Housecall Providers’ first palliative care patient not associated with its primary care program.

“Improving the quality of life for CareOregon members with advanced illness is without question one of the benefits of this new partnership,” says Housecall Providers Clinical Operations Director Kristi Youngs, BSN, RN, CHPN.

No one knows better than McClain the importance of the right resource at the right time. For the last five years, she has relied heavily on the support of one of CareOregon’s respiratory therapists, Heather Stoecklin.

“Heather was going to do everything that she could do to help me because she saw my will to survive,” says McClain. Another “angel” of her care team is CareOregon nurse Monica Ontiveros, BSN,

RN, CCCTM. Ontiveros has been visiting McClain at her apartment in North Portland since last December.

Receiving medical care in the comfort and convenience of her home has meant that the energy she would normally spend getting to her appointments can now be used to engage with her community.

“I am able to go to my meetings, which is so wonderful because it gets me up and out and allows

me to communicate with people of all walks”, says McClain.

Palliative medicine focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. By deeply exploring a patient’s personal goals, the palliative care team helps match those goals and options.

“A lot of things were going on with me around anxiety and depression, and I wanted to discover where those emotions were coming from,” says McClain. “I could feel myself giving up at times when I would start to backslide, and when that would happen, I didn’t feel right with God.”

During one of their usual Tuesday appointments, Ontiveros was joined by Housecall Providers Palliative Care Spiritual

Counselor Dean Yamamoto, M.Div., BCC, as part of the two organizations’ integration work.



*Gloria McClain (center) surrounded by her family and care team members from Housecall Providers and CareOregon.*

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GLORIA MCCLAIN

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## Housecall Providers adds another member to its “Dream Team”

Hospice Chaplain Sam Aylor, M.Div, was selected to the Oregon Hospice Association’s Dream Team last month at its annual conference. Aylor is Housecall Providers’ fourth member to join the team, following in the footsteps of Volunteer Coordinator Todd Lawrence (‘13), Certified Nursing Assistant Yana Kasim (‘14) and Medical Director Dr. Nancy Cloak, HMDC (‘16).

“There is a reason why several of my colleagues at Housecall Providers have received this award, and why I know many more will receive it in years to come,” Aylor says.

The Hospice Association invites member agencies to submit Dream Team nominations for staff members whose contributions improve the access to and the quality of hospice and palliative care in their communities.

“Sam is the kind of chaplain we would all want to show up at that difficult moment,” says Lead Chaplain A.C. Caldwell, M.Div. “He leads the way with his embodiment of the depths of caring and with the light touch of his humor. He really is the full package.” Aylor, who has been with Housecall Providers Hospice for just under two years, has become



*The Housecall Providers Hospice Dream Team members: (l) Todd Lawrence, Sam Aylor, M.Div., Dr. Nancy Cloak, HMDC (not pictured, Yana Kasim).*

an invaluable member of the hospice team. His colleagues consistently report that he shows up at just the right time to care for patients’ and families’ needs and provides support for his fellow staff throughout the organization.

“I have the rare privilege of working in a nurturing environment that takes care of me the way I try to take care of my patients and colleagues,” says Aylor. “To have my peers see my happiness and gratitude come through in my work truly is the reward.”

## Connection key to living with COPD (cont.)

“I had known that Gloria was struggling spiritually, and I was working on trying to connect her with a church,” says Ontiveros. “On a day when Dean was with me, he and Gloria had a moment to connect privately, and that is when she shared with him her desire to be baptized.”

An ordained Methodist minister, Yamamoto was honored to be asked to perform her baptism, especially after hearing how much anxiety she was feeling from not taking that step in her spiritual life.

“The job of a palliative care chaplain is to stay within the patient’s spiritual frame of reference and to support whatever that might be,” says Yamamoto. There was a time that McClain thought she had used up all her chances, but the support of her family, community and her care team showed her how important it is that she carry on.

“I feel blessed every morning I take my first breath,” says McClain. “I no longer ask, ‘why me, why me?’ I know now that it is so somebody else can know why.”

## Farewell to a house call champion (cont.)

“Being number one in the nation two years in a row with the Independence at Home (IAH) demonstration really put us on the map,” says Hobbs. “To have our model validated is a testament to the staff and their commitment to excellent patient-centered care.”

With Housecall Providers now part of the CareOregon family, it has what it needed all along: a like-minded partner. CareOregon not only knows the vital role house calls currently play within our community, but the enormous potential they have to be an agent of change.

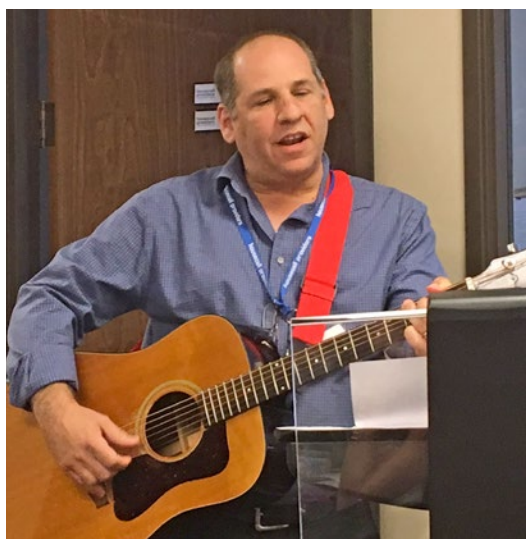
“After meeting Terri and learning more about Housecall Providers’ past, I let the CareOregon leadership know that this is where I wanted to be,” says Executive Director Rebecca Ramsay, MPH, BSN. “She left some very big shoes to fill, but also a spirit of resiliency and hope that will carry us towards her goal of one day making home-based medicine a norm in our community.”

Staff and board members who have worked with Hobbs the last 16 years know that it was her compassion for and commitment to the patients that gave her the courage to do whatever was necessary to keep the service viable. Last month they paid tribute to her with a celebratory luncheon honoring her years of service.

After taking some well-deserved time off, Hobbs plans to reengage in her support of home-based primary medical care working locally and nationally towards the goal of seeing IAH become a Medicare program.

“I want to focus my energies towards having home-based primary care become a standard in Oregon,” says Hobbs. “When the times comes, this is the care that I want for myself.”

Thanks to Hobbs, that care could likely be delivered by Housecall Providers.



*Todd Lawrence performing the song he wrote for the occasion.*

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Email us at  
[bgorman@housecallproviders.org](mailto:bgorman@housecallproviders.org)



## Our Vision

To sustainably transform home-based medicine so homebound adults or those living with serious illness have access to care that improves their quality of life.



**To make a hospice referral  
at any time call  
971-202-5501**



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**PLEASE NOTE:** Our office will be closed November 23 and 24 in observance of Thanksgiving. Please call the afterhours number for urgent issues.

## Strong relationships (cont.)

It was during nursing school, while also caring for her grandmother in hospice, that she first truly connected with her passion for palliative and end-of-life care.

“Hospice is so different from other types of care. To be invited into someone’s life at such an intimate time is very special and shouldn’t be taken for granted,” says Youngs.

Because she believes so deeply in the value of this kind of relationship-based care, Youngs is passionate

## Emerson House (cont.)

Another major positive according to Jones, is that the Housecall Providers clinicians know their patients and the population at Emerson House very well. “When they are examining a resident, they don’t need to pull staff away from their other duties and that is a big plus for us.”

Because of Housecall Providers’ continuum of care, Jones says that the transition for residents from primary care to hospice is a smooth one. One of the reasons is Hospice Social Worker Youske Eto, LCSW, who is a favorite of staff because of the gentle but firm touch he has with patients’ family members.

“Sometimes we find ourselves when a physician is recommending a hospice for their patient, pulling for Housecall Providers because of the positive impact that Youske and the rest of the hospice team has had at Emerson House,” says Jones. “They have really helped us care for families that are struggling.”

about extending this model and its many benefits to other individuals with serious health problems who often can’t access care.

“There are whole populations of people that aren’t being served, that don’t even understand what hospice and palliative care are, or that they’re a resource,” she explains “Most hospices or palliative care programs are not designed to serve a homeless population. Palliative care should be standard care for everyone, not just seniors, but everyone.”

Youngs’ voice becomes more forceful and enthusiastic as she shares her hopes for the future of the Housecall Providers Hospice and Palliative Care programs.

“I’m excited to figure out how we can provide this integrated continuum of care to more people and to more vulnerable populations,” says Youngs. “How can we maintain the quality of our care but serve more patients and give more families the opportunity to be supported in this way?”

The answer, of course, lies in forging strong relationships – this time within her own team.

“This work is hard. Whatever we do going forward, we need to be building a resilient workforce. We need to make sure we’re supporting our teams so they can do this work.”

For Youngs, joining the Housecall Providers team has been even better than expected.

“Everything I’d heard about Housecall Providers [in the past] has been totally validated – the amazing people, the programs, it has all been validated,” says Youngs. “Everyone here is truly devoted to the work we’re doing.”