



# THE PATIENT'S ADVOCATE

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



*Staff from Housecall Providers attended a Welcome Night at CareOregon in May to tour offices, meet members of the human resources and leadership teams and share a meal together.*

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## It's official: Housecall Providers is now a member of the CareOregon Family

After months of planning and negotiation, Housecall Providers became an official member of CareOregon on May 30 but will continue as a separate nonprofit, retaining its name, current providers, patients, services and location. This strategic partnership is designed to increase access and enhance home-based medicine across the Portland metro area.

"Our long relationship made CareOregon the ideal choice when we began looking for a partner that could help us grow and strengthen our services," said former Housecall Providers Executive Director Terri Hobbs. "We knew they shared our same goals, values and nonprofit status, and would enable us to continue as a unique entity, but with a

strong, innovative partner backing us."

Housecall Providers' board and executive leadership were drawn to the structure and array of coordinated care services offered through CareOregon. More care options mean that the chronically ill patients served by the nonprofit will have their health needs addressed in a way that many have never experienced before, certainly not in a home environment.

Hobbs will continue in the role of executive advisor through the fall to provide incoming Executive Director Rebecca Ramsay, BSN, MPH, with strategic input and counsel on business integration and transition activities, operational best practices and potential growth opportunities.

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## Innovation and equality hallmarks of new executive director



Rebecca Ramsay, BSN, MPH

Medicine is in the blood, so to speak, of Housecall Providers' newly christened Executive Director Rebecca Ramsay, BSN, MPH. Coming from a long line of doctors and nurses, she learned early on the value and

sense of pride found

in supporting the health of one's community.

"My father was a Roseburg physician who took care of low-income workers. Many times they were unable to pay by traditional means, so he would be offered crafts or fresh steelhead for his services," says Ramsay. "I saw the economic gap that existed in my hometown and how, at times, people struggled to access adequate health care."

Either DNA or early life experiences led Ramsay into a career in nursing. Although she enjoyed direct patient care with veterans and young mothers, it was her research work with the National Institutes of Health that ignited her passion to further investigate the health care disparities she witnessed in her hometown. That desire led her to earn a master's degree in Public Health with an emphasis on health care policy, leadership and public administration.

"My passion for population health and improving care for vulnerable citizens took shape as I learned about the biases inherent in non-socialized health care systems like ours," she continued.

Her first job out of graduate school was with CareOregon, developing and scaling their high-risk case management program. Twelve years later, she has directed the design and implementation of multiple programs, most recently as the executive director of the organization's population health division.

"It's impossible to overstate Rebecca's impact at CareOregon these last 12 years," says Housecall Providers Senior Medical Director for Clinical Operations, Dr. Will Kennedy. "She is an innovator with a passion for creating programs and services that have vastly improved the delivery of health care to many of our community's most vulnerable members."

In 2011, Ramsay was part of a small group of health care leaders from the Portland metro area who wrote and received a three-year, \$17.2 million Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Innovation Award to replicate clinical programs that would improve care, lower costs and enhance satisfaction among Medicaid recipients in our community.

*"Although innovation and change will be necessary to secure continued sustainability of Housecall Providers, much of what made this nonprofit so successful must be protected and fostered as we move forward..."*

"My new role with HCP is a natural evolution of the work I have been doing for the past 12 years, and it represents what I believe to be the most important

addition to CareOregon's service model to date," Ramsay stated.

Ramsay lives in Southeast Portland with her husband and two teenage sons. A former nationally ranked triathlete, she enjoys international travel, Portland's ever-expanding restaurant scene and cheering on her sons' high school basketball and baseball teams.

In the coming months, Ramsay's most critical responsibility will be to ensure that the culture, values, and mission of Housecall Providers remain central to the work of the organization.

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*“The population of the metro area is evolving, and there is a growing need for home-based primary, palliative and hospice care in addition to the traditional clinic setting.”*

Eric C. Hunter,  
CEO of CareOregon



*Eric Hunter and Terri Hobbs, executive advisor of Housecall Providers*

# Meet CareOregon

It was no coincidence that CareOregon opened its doors on Feb. 1, 1994, the same day that the Oregon Health Plan officially launched. A year before, health care leaders from the Multnomah County Health Department, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and the Oregon Primary Care Association came together to create a health plan that could ensure high-quality care to low-income Oregonians.

▶ *CareOregon is a safety net nonprofit health plan serving the health care needs of low-income Oregonians. They serve approximately 175,000 Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) and Medicare members and their communities.*

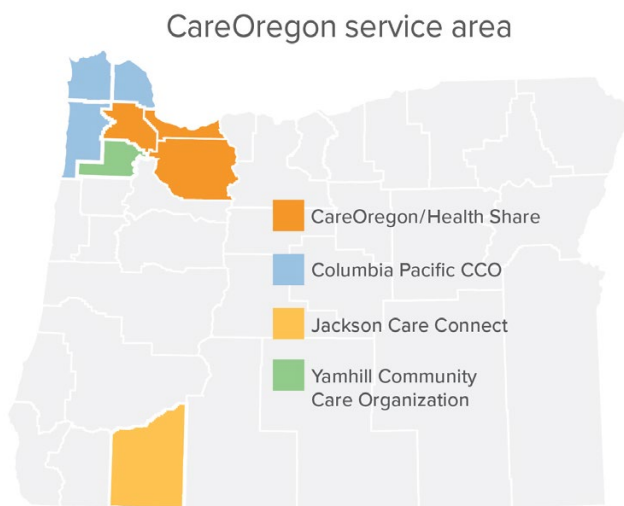
*VISION: Healthy communities for all individuals, regardless of income or social circumstances.*



From the start, CareOregon's leadership believed that preventive services and support for chronic conditions was the key to providing the best quality care while reducing costs. They met those goals by addressing both physical and behavioral health needs, while helping members break down the social, emotional and economic barriers to overall well-being. This holistic model of care, developed over two decades, continues to inform CareOregon's programs, services and partnerships today, and has led to national recognition as a world-class innovator.



▶ *CareOregon's focus on innovation is fueled by the belief that collaborating with members, their families, providers and communities can help transform health throughout the state.*



CareOregon serves both Medicare recipients and Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members through partnerships with four Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs). CCOs bring together physical, dental and behavioral care, and addiction treatment, for people covered by OHP. Serving the whole person through coordinated care is the cornerstone of CareOregon's commitment to its members, reflecting its overarching goal of making high-quality health care available to all Oregonians, regardless of income.

▶ *CCOs address the underlying determinants of health and well-being.*

▶ *CareOregon is one of 16 CCOs in Oregon. They partner with Health Share to serve the tri-county Portland metro area, own Jackson Care Connect and Columbia Pacific CCO, and contract to provide administrative services for Yamhill County CCO.*

# PCP surprises patient with a glimpse into her past

When Primary Care Provider Rachel Prusak, FNP, met patient Lucille Blende, 95, last autumn she knew she was going to be in for a treat. “Right off the bat I knew that Lucille was an extremely sharp woman,” Prusak said. Over the months that followed, she would come to fully understand the truth of that first impression.



*Patient Lucille Blende and PCP Rachel Prusak have struck up quite a friendship since meeting last year.*

Prusak was amazed by the stories that Blende, a former engineer, shared about her work on nuclear propulsion, especially with the MDD

Group, a private contractor that specialized in missile development. Later, this group would evolve into what is known today as NASA.

Blende’s childhood was typical of those who grew up on a farm in rural Pennsylvania in the 1920s. “You learn responsibility fast, very fast,” she said. By four or five years old Blende would frequently accompany her father, an Italian immigrant, to the market in a horse and buggy to sell their vegetables. “By seven, I was the one tasked with going to the bank and making the deposits. I guess I was my dad’s girl,” she chuckled.

More likely her father realized early on that his youngest daughter had an eye for numbers and was helping to foster that gift. It appears his strategy paid off.

Blende made a career for herself as an engineer working on early transistor technology in the 1950s, which culminated in her greatest professional accomplishment: helping to create and test the integrated circuits and transistors which made it possible for the USS Nautilus, the world’s first nuclear submarine, to complete a submerged transit of the North Pole.

Upon learning Blende’s story, Prusak decided to call in a favor from a Hollywood connection to give her homebound patient a special treat. “I was sent a copy of the film Hidden Figures, even though it was still only playing in theaters,” she said.

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## Additional Stories:

Additional stories can be found on our blog at [www.housecallproviders.org/blog](http://www.housecallproviders.org/blog)

**Staff member exemplifies a mission-driven life:  
Sister Jeanette Heindl, RN**

**Army veteran drawn to work with homebound population**



## Our Mission

**Housecall Providers** is dedicated to providing quality home-centered medical care, integrating primary, palliative and hospice services for homebound members of our community. We offer compassionate physical, emotional and spiritual support through life’s journey.

**housecall  
providers**



**Hospice**  
*because every day matters*

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

Want to go paperless or stop  
receiving our newsletter? Email us  
at [bgorman@housecallproviders.org](mailto:bgorman@housecallproviders.org).

## Housecall joins CareOregon

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Joining Ramsay from CareOregon will be Dr. Will Kennedy and Kristi Youngs, RN. Dr. Kennedy will assume the newly created position of Senior Medical Director for Clinical Operations overseeing current Medical Director Dr. Pamela Miner. As the clinical operations director, Youngs will supervise primary and palliative care support, hospice, billing and quality improvements.

"I know I speak for all the CareOregon staff when I say how excited we are to work together in this greater capacity," Ramsay said. "Housecall Providers has been a point of pride for the Portland health care community for a long time, and I look forward to continuing and building on that excellent reputation."

## New executive director

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"Although innovation and change will be necessary to secure continued sustainability of Housecall Providers, much of what made this nonprofit so successful must be protected and fostered as we move forward and build on the blueprint that the board, Terri and the staff have created over the years," she said.

## PCP surprises patient

(continued from page 3)

The movie tells the story of three African-American women who served vital roles as NASA mathematicians during the early years of the U.S. space program. It struck a chord with Blende, who understood much of what the women went through. Blende was one of two women in her class at the University of Pennsylvania to study mechanical and electrical engineering. She was hired by Westinghouse right out of college as a draftsman and stayed for 10 years before moving to General Motors, where she was an inspector for a few years. But it was her interest in aeronautics that drew her to California, where she landed a job with the MDD Group.

"We would drive up to the San Gabriel Mountains to perform the first nuclear tests, and all of us had to wear radiation badges to make sure we were always at a safe level of exposure," she remembered. "That was the very beginning of the space program."

Blende has been receiving in-home medical care from Housecall Providers ever since the rides to and from her doctor's office became too painful. She recently started receiving palliative care services in addition to a monthly house call.

"I appreciate the care I have received from the staff of Housecall Providers this past year," Blende said. "They are all very friendly and knowledgeable, and I look forward to their visits." For Prusak, meeting amazing people like Housecall Providers' own "Hidden Figure" is just one of the perks of the job.