

Summer 2019

The Patient's Advocate

An update from a national leader in home-based medicine



**Housecall
Providers**

Part of the CareOregon Family

**Improving lives
by bringing
health care home**



The new logo was inspired by a quilt that hung in our office for years.

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Our new logo comes from our past

We're excited to present our new logo to the community! Like many redesigns, our new look was created through hours of listening to staff about what Housecall Providers means to them, our patients and families, and the larger community.

The image of the quilt rose to the top with the team that designed the logo because of its longtime presence within our organization. For years, community groups have donated these treasures as gifts for our patients, and one very special quilt hung in our office for more than 10 years. Yet it was the symbolism behind the quilt that piqued the designers' interest because it aligned so closely with the feedback they were receiving from staff.

The quilt that decorated the wall in the reception area was made

by one of our patients. Its heart-shaped squares were stitched with words to live by. The quilt had been donated as an auction item – then purchased and donated back to us. People asked about it as they walked through our reception area, and we shared its special story. Now, a representation of that beautiful artifact lives on in our new logo.

The feelings and ideas associated with the word “quilt” are also represented in the new logo. What comes to mind when you think of a quilt? (See “Our new logo” page 5)



Many patients benefit from a stable, familiar environment, making in-home medical appointments especially valuable.

Adult care home owner grateful for her lasting partnership with Housecall Providers

Adult care home (ACH) owner/operator Erika Covaciu easily recalls her reaction when she first heard about a doctor in Portland who made house calls to people who were homebound.

“Is this for real?” she thought. “I had to pinch myself because it seemed too good to be true.” Erika had learned about Doctor Housecalls, the business that Dr. Benneth Husted started in 1993 before incorporating it, two years later, as the nonprofit Housecall Providers.

“One of my residents who had Alzheimer’s disease was seen by Dr. Husted,” says Erika. “She had severe behavioral problems on top of her other health issues, so taking her out of the house to doctors’ appointments was a real struggle, to say the least.”

As veteran caregivers like Erika know, people who have Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia have a hard time bouncing back when they are taken out of familiar environments. Sometimes the impact from going to a medical appointment can leave a person agitated and out of sorts for days or even a week, which can be equally hard on the caregiver.

“We needed help now, and I couldn’t wait to hire someone two or three weeks down the road,” Erika says, “I was very grateful that Dr. Husted helped solve this issue for us.”

Erika estimates that in the last 32 years, she has cared for more than 60 residents, and that easily 90% of them became Housecall Providers patients. When a new resident came into her house, she “moved mountains” to get them onto Housecall Providers because Erika knew the level of care they would receive and how beneficial it would be for the patient, their family – and her, as the main caregiver.

“Whenever I have a vacancy and a family tours my home, I would always bring up Housecall Providers. I would say, ‘Whether your mom, dad or whomever

is going to move into my home or not, you need to know about Housecall Providers.' People are always grateful for the tip," she says.

Currently, all five of her residents are receiving medical care from Housecall Providers. And it is the availability of the primary care providers and the rest of the team that she appreciates most.

"... Maria made herself available even though she had a full day of appointments on her calendar. That commitment to care was not lost on Erika."

"As a caregiver, it's so important that when somebody has a fever, and we don't know what the cause is, to be able to put that call in to Housecall Providers, and know that maybe not today but tomorrow my resident is being seen before it becomes a big issue," she says.

Erika recalls a time when Maria Bucio, family nurse practitioner with Housecall Providers, was the primary care provider for her home. One of Erika's residents had a very challenging health problem, and Maria made herself

available even though she had a full day of appointments on her calendar. That commitment to care was not lost on Erika.

"I would have needed to hire transportation and companions, but because Maria recognized what a big issue this was, it saved me from going that route. What more could you ask for? It's a real partnership," she says.

Having an adult care home is not an eight-hour-a-day job. Owners like Erika who are also caregivers need to be available all day long, seven days a week.

"You're at your home all the time and finding the right help is very hard. When you do, it's like hitting the jackpot, but jackpots only happen once in a while," she says.

One thing that Erika and other caregivers within the Portland metro area can rely on is the continued commitment of Housecall Providers to serve as their partner.

"We are so lucky," says Erika, "to have this service in our community." ■



ACH owner/operator Erika Covaciu tells the family of every potential resident about Housecall Providers.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

Dick and Marsha Yandell

When you feel passionate about a cause close to your heart, there always seems to be a way to talk to friends and family about its merit and benefit to society.

Friends of Marsha and Dick Yandell know this firsthand, ever since the duo added a fundraising component three years ago to Marsha's annual birthday golf tournament. This gave friends and family the opportunity to support "Bringing Music Home," a Housecall Providers program that Dick has volunteered with since 2016.

It was natural and easy to incorporate a little fundraising into this annual golf event. Marsha and Dick tell stories about the music program, inspiring their friends to contribute. Over the last three years, the Yandells have raised more than \$3,500.

Dick was introduced to Housecall Providers through caring for his 98-year-old father. Like many people who care for loved ones with dementia, he struggled to keep up with the medical challenges that many people afflicted with the illness face. "After 10 years of caring for my father, it was a godsend to find out about Housecall Providers," says Dick. "The care that Dad received

made a huge impression on me and my family."

Early in 2016, Dick and Marsha noticed a small article in the Housecall Providers newsletter about Bringing Music Home. The program seemed like a perfect volunteer opportunity because Dick is what Marsha calls an "audiophile."

"...the Yandells have raised more than \$3,500 for the music program."

Music has always played a large part in Dick's life, from playing in a band to putting together playlists for himself and friends. Extending his hobby to create playlists for dementia and hospice patients seemed an ideal way to give back. He was one of the first volunteers of Bringing Music Home and has been with the program ever since.

"Dick really knows his music, but it's his dedication to our patient population that really



Dick and Marsha Yandell combined forces to "bring music home."

sets him apart," says Volunteer Coordinator Todd Lawrence.

The Yandells are also beneficiaries of Bringing Music Home. They now help care for Dick's 96-year-old aunt, a Housecall Providers patient who has dementia. This year, she received an MP3 player and speaker from the program.

"My aunt constantly tells us how wonderful the music is and how much she enjoys it," says Marsha. "Her caregivers say you can often hear her singing along to her favorite songs, and it has helped calm her agitation and brought her peace."

Thanks to the generosity of the Yandells, more homebound and chronically ill people will have an opportunity to have a personalized playlist. And that is music to everyone's ears. ■

Our new logo (From page 1)

Warmth, beauty, patience, skill, community-minded (quilting bee), security and comfort are a few of the words that stand out. Coincidentally, some of the same words were selected by staff to describe the services Housecall Providers offers to our patients.



Our new Housecall Providers and Housecall Providers Hospice logos.

Then there's the phrase our hospice nurses say when a patient's immediate needs have been met and the patient is resting comfortably. When they say a patient is "tucked in," everyone on that team knows the patient has been fully taken care of for the night. Like a quilt, the staff of Housecall Providers strives to be that layer of comfort and security to patients and family members who seek the support that only a home-based medical house call can provide. ■

Moving our mission forward

If you'd like to get more involved in the mission of Housecall Providers, we have some ideas for you:

Volunteer with us. We're committed to meeting the needs of a population that is frequently isolated and underserved. Opportunities are available as a patient or administrative volunteer. The next patient volunteer training begins Sept. 16. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Todd Lawrence at tlawrence@housecallproviders.org or 971-202-5515 to learn more.

Become a Housecall ambassador. Help raise awareness of the mission of Housecall Providers by connecting our outreach team to your church, social group, workplace giving campaign or professional organization. Help your community understand the importance of our services, mission, and our work at the national level to advance home-based medicine.

Make us the beneficiary of your special event. Have fun and support the mission by making Housecall Providers the beneficiary of your special event. Whether it's a birthday party, backyard concert or sporting event, you can harness the generosity of your friends and family to make a real difference for the most-vulnerable people in your community.

Donate your vehicle. If you have an unwanted vehicle, running or not, call us! We partner with Volunteers of America Oregon Charity Connections to provide an easy way to get rid of your old vehicle. You receive a tax deduction and help Housecall Providers at the same time.

To find out more about these opportunities, please contact Development Coordinator Mary Finn at mfinn@housecallproviders.org or 971-202-5541.

IAH results show high quality and lower spending

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released fourth-year results for Independence at Home (IAH), a nationwide demonstration project. Spending within the 14 IAH practices was 8.9% below spending targets. Savings totaled \$32.9 million, or an average of \$2,814 per beneficiary.

Housecall Providers' IAH beneficiaries saved 28.8%

over a matched group of local individuals with similar chronic conditions but not receiving home-based medical care. Because we met all six quality measures (as we have each year), Housecall Providers will receive \$800,183 as a share of the cost savings.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who co-sponsored the legislation that created Independence at

Home, had urged us in 2012 to consider taking part. "Housecall Providers continues to be a nationwide leader when it comes to providing quality care for seniors in their homes and keeping health costs down for Medicare," says Sen. Wyden. He added that Housecall Providers' work is showing "what the Medicare program of the future ought to look like." See more at housecallproviders.org/blog ■