

# The Patient's Advocate

An update from a national leader in home-based medicine



Improving lives  
by bringing  
health care home



Emcees Jeremiah Rigsby and Rachel Prusak entertain the viewers who livestreamed Housecall Providers' first ever virtual event.

## 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary a success in every way

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[housecallproviders.org](https://housecallproviders.org)

Housecall Providers 25th anniversary event House Party for House Calls was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 – raising nearly \$50,000 for home-based medicine and celebrating all that the nonprofit organization has been and continues to be for our community.

Due to COVID-19, staff began making preparations in early summer for the virtual celebration, taking cues from nonprofit organizations who have hosted hundreds of fundraisers and events since the onset of the pandemic last spring.

Almost 250 separate households tuned into the livestreamed event which featured CareOregon Chief of Staff

Jeremiah Rigsby and Primary Care Provider Rachel Prusak as emcees of the night's festivities. Regence, a long-time partner of Housecall Providers, was the event's premier sponsor.

"We were thrilled at the turnout for our 25th anniversary celebration," says CEO Rebecca Ramsay. "If COVID-19 has had a silver lining for us in terms of our event, it was that those

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Staying connected to family and friends is a healthy way to ease anxiety.

## Bereavement support and resources

As we collectively continue to navigate the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as the racial and political tensions that have defined this year – taking care of ourselves and finding support where we can has never been more important. We are certainly in uncharted waters as social distancing, isolation, health risks, violence and financial concerns have become part of our daily lives. Sometimes it feels that each day brings a new sense of uncertainty and unpredictability.

The changes that we have had to make to our lives can feel overwhelming, unpredictable

and bring with them the potential for a huge range of emotions. We are experiencing collective grief, a multitude of losses in terms of relationships, routines, safety, financial security, human connection and a predictable future. All these losses are valid and important and can elicit emotions that include anxiety, hopelessness, uncertainty and confusion. Feelings of grief relate to any loss, and the emotions are the same whether we are mourning a death, a job, a relationship, or a way of life.

It is important to rely on the coping strategies that work best for you. Below are a few methods to help you manage grief, loss, anxiety and emotional fatigue.

### Take good care of yourself

Practice what brings peace and a sense of calm to you, even if it's for a moment or small segments of time. Be sure to eat well, rest, meditate, rely on faith and look to nature. Tap into simple joys like baking, pets, art and other creative outlets. Reach out to your medical provider, if support is needed. Mental health clinics are open in some capacity, and many medical professionals are using virtual visits to stay connected to their patients.

Try to limit news and social media exposure and reduce caffeine and alcohol. These tend to be stimulants that can actually increase stress levels. And always look for more simple ways

to laugh, play and bring joy to your life.

### Maintain connection

Stay connected to family, friends and faith communities, either in person or electronically. Talk about your feelings, listen and share concerns. Remember to wave at neighbors, write letters and be creative with how you can connect during this time.

### Explore resources

The following is a list of grief/loss and mental health resources the team has put together. This, of course, is not an exhaustive list but for many it may be a good place to start. There are also grief support and mental wellness groups on Facebook that may be helpful, too.

[Whatsyourgrief.com](https://www.whatsyourgrief.com) – grief articles, chat groups

[Dougy.org](https://www.dougy.org) – grief/loss for children, teens and young adults. Articles and good age related tip sheets

[Compassionatefriends.org](https://www.compassionatefriends.org) – support after losing a child of any age

[Journeyofhearts.org](https://www.journeyofhearts.org) – information, support and chat groups

[Thewellnesssociety.org](https://www.thewellnesssociety.org) – ideas for anyone managing anxiety

(See “Bereavement support” page 5)



Hospice CNA Amanda Mikkelsen is happy to be tested regularly for COVID-19 because that means she can continue to safely be there for her patients.

## Staff Spotlight: Hospice CNA Amanda Mikkelsen

### 1. How long have you been a CNA? What inspired you to get into this line of work?

I have been a CNA for nine years. I started out as a caregiver and I wanted to expand my skillset and help more people. That's what led me to get my CNA license. I worked in a memory care community right after I had my first baby and I met a hospice nurse who came to care for one of our residents. She was kind, sweet and very caring towards my resident. Meeting her is what ultimately led me to the best career change I've ever made – hospice care. About four years ago, I also went in for my CHPNA certification, which means I am now hospice and palliative care certified.

### 2. What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy being able to come into a patient's home and provide comfort and happiness for them, as well as their families, during what may be a difficult time.

### 3. What is the hardest part about your job?

One of the things that can be hard about the kind of work I do is getting close to a patient and their family after caring for them for so long and then having them pass away.

### 4. How has your job changed since COVID-19?

The amount of PPE we wear at each visit makes it sometimes difficult to work the way we normally do. It can be extremely

hot in the gowns/bodysuits. The N-95 mask, along with the surgical mask and face shield, make it hard for people like me who wear glasses due to the fogging up issue.

### 5. What is something you wish people better understood about this/your work?

I wish people better understood that hospice is amazing! The work we do and the support we offer to our patients and families is just as special as the people who deliver the care. Not everyone can do the jobs that we do.

### 6. What kind of things do you do to take care of yourself outside of work?

I enjoy spending as much time as I can with my kids. I have two boys, an almost 2-year-old and an almost 7-year-old. We love this time of year because the holidays are so much fun!

### 7. Do you feel safe doing your job right now?

Right now, Multnomah county has an 11% infection rate, so we're being tested at the office once per week – which is great, and we will be moving to two times a week shortly because of the climbing rate of infection. The test is not fun, but I'd rather have 1,000 nose swabs than stop caring for my patients because they need us. ■



# A heart full of gratitude

Little did Tara “Lynn” Trickle know how much her life would change after she received a phone call in late August from a member of the Housecall Providers Advanced Illness Care (AIC) team. At the time, she was awaiting more test results after an initial cancer diagnosis.

“All of a sudden, I had all these advocates calling me and talking to me and asking what I needed and how they could help. It was as if angels had fallen out of the sky,” says Lynn, a 54-year old Portland native.

Since being estranged from her family, and because of limited and inconsistent income, Lynn had been living in a shed in her friend’s backyard for the last five years. She bathed and got indoors a little each night at a friend’s hair salon, while also cleaning it each time she visited to bring in a little income.

The AIC team started working on housing for her, however, they had to wait until a confirmed diagnosis and prognosis of one year or less in order to get Lynn on the priority housing waiting list.

In her recent past, Lynn



Advanced Illness Care Social Worker Melodie Kelly, LCSW talks with Lynn Trickle about her housing application and upcoming treatment schedule.

had had a thriving cleaning business built only by referrals until some “overwhelming grief, miscommunications and a few bad decisions” as she puts it, brought her to where she is now. A woman of faith, Lynn found community and peace in being of service to others. Until COVID-19 struck Portland, she had been putting food boxes together and helping with the Sunday breakfast at Highland Christian Center for over a year.

When test results from the MRI and PET scan came back in early September and confirmed lung cancer with metastasis to the bone, the request for housing was submitted. AIC team members also made a referral to BEST at Central City Concern to help her fill out the necessary paperwork to get Social Security Disability since she had little to no income.

Once the priority housing

paperwork was submitted, a request was made to the CareOregon housing team for a hotel voucher.

“Lynn had already been struggling, but when the smoke from the fires hit the Portland area her shortness of breath increased so we moved quickly to get her into a hotel,” says AIC Licensed Clinical Social Worker Melodie Kelly.

The plan was for Lynn to start chemotherapy in a couple of weeks so what was planned as a short stay, has turned out to be more than two months at the hotel.

“CareOregon has been really amazing. We had asked for a couple of weeks but with her condition and the air quality issues they granted her two extensions,” says Melodie. “They really do take care of their members and

## 25th anniversary

(From page 1)

who would not normally be able to attend - caregivers and our regional and national partners were able to join us that evening so it made it that much more special.”

The event featured a video from founder, Dr. Benneth Husted, who talked about the origins of the nonprofit and how it has managed to continue amid some pretty lean years. In addition to that video, guests heard from Ramsay and keynote speaker Dr. Tom Cornwell, a notable expert in home-based medicine and current senior medical director of Village Medical at Home.

Along with offering his congratulations, Dr. Cornwell spoke about the importance of house calls in our society, citing the nearly three million people in our country that could benefit

from home-based primary and palliative care, while only 15% receive it. “What would we think if only 15% of cancer, heart failure, or COVID patients were served?” His remarks also focused on the impact Housecall Providers has had by training providers and practices locally and nationally through the Home Centered Care Institute, an organization centered on advancing home-based primary care for chronically ill and medically complex patients.

Attendees were also treated to a performance by the Prescriptions, a group of L.A. musicians who came together for one time only, to perform Bringing that Health Care Home, a funky tune that will surely become Housecall Providers’ theme song.

With the help of some incredibly generous matching gift opportunities from two major donors, Housecall Providers

brought in over \$13,000 in gifts of \$100 or more and over \$5,000 from new donors.

“The support from our community was really inspiring to see,” says Ramsay. “The 13 sponsors who stepped up for us, all the auction donors and especially those who gave gifts to fund this important community asset.”

If you missed the event you can still access it at [avstream.me/housecallproviders](https://avstream.me/housecallproviders) or visit the Housecall Providers YouTube channel to watch separate elements of the program. ■

**We are now scheduling  
flu shots for current  
patients. Please call  
971-202-5500  
to schedule  
an appointment.**

## Bereavement support

(From page 2)

Suicide Prevention Hotline:  
1-800-273-8255

SAMHSA’s National Hotline:  
1-800-662-4357 free,  
confidential 24/7, 365 days  
a year treatment referral and  
information line (English and  
Spanish). For individuals and  
families facing mental health  
and/or substance use disorders.

**Been considering home-based primary  
care for you or a loved one?**

**Our low waitlist makes this a perfect time to  
call our intake team at 971-202-5500 for  
more information.**




## Gratitude (From page 4)

this is just one of many examples.”

Melodie says that Lynn’s positive outlook has remained. At the end of every call or visit, she always says how grateful she is for all the support. Like many of our AIC patients, Lynn expressed to the team that she has never had this kind of support in her life or felt this cared for.

“I get to exhale, and the opportunity to be me again,” says Lynn. “I feel very blessed and really appreciate everything they have done. Their kindness and caring have helped me in ways they can never know.” ■



### ***My silly poem for all of the people at Housecall Providers***

**By Lynn Trickle**

*I have no way to tell you how blessed I feel  
for each one of you.*

*I thought how could I  
show them or what can I do.*

*So, I wrote a silly little poem for all of you,  
Please take it to heart because each one is true.*

*I am so very grateful for each one of you,  
For the caring the compassion and all that you do.*

*I have no idea how you can do what you do,  
But now I have hope because of each one of you.  
You gave me the strength and the hope that I couldn't  
find on my own.*

*You took me out of the cold and gave me  
a place to call home.*

