

Summer 2020

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



IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1 Help us celebrate 25 years
of delivering home-based
medical care

Page 2 CEO Report

Page 3 Traveling the path toward
deeper connection

Page 4 For safety's sake –
caregivers appreciate
telehealth option

Page 5 Death at a distance:
how virtual memorials
help families mourn
amid a pandemic

housecallproviders.org

The Housecall Providers 25th anniversary celebration is Tuesday, October 13, 2020, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Help us celebrate 25 years of delivering home-based medical care

Please join us for our virtual House Party for House Calls event on October 13. The live stream program is free to the public, but VIP passes are being sold for \$55, which includes a professionally prepared three-course meal and wine delivered to your door a day prior to the event.

"Knowing how much everyone is interacting with technology within their work and personal lives, we really wanted to create a fun and lively event to encourage people to log back on," says CEO Rebecca Ramsay.

The emcees for the evening will be primary care provider and Oregon State Senator Rachel

Prusak, and CareOregon Chief of Staff Jeremiah Rigsby.

The pre-party will kick off at 5:40 pm, featuring the tracks of a live DJ, pictures from the last two decades, shout-outs to our event sponsors, and info on how to sign up for the auction. It's also the opportunity for those who (See "Help us celebrate" page 7)



Rebecca Ramsay

PROTECTING YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Please continue to follow Governor Kate Brown's stay-at-home order and CDC guidelines. You can also reach out by phone or computer to 211, a free, confidential referral and information helpline and website that connects people to the essential health and human services they need. 211 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

CEO REPORT

Dear patients, caregivers, family members and community supporters,

I have a strong suspicion those who have been involved with our organization these past 25 years know that there is something quite special happening at Housecall Providers. I felt it immediately upon joining Housecall Providers but couldn't quite put my finger on it. Sure, there was the novelty of being part of an organization that sets itself apart from the norm of health care delivery in so many ways, but it went beyond that.

Now, almost three years in, I think part of it lies in the type of people an organization like ours draws into its fold. Like the amazing employees and volunteers that have walked through our doors and added their distinct passion to our brand of medicine, many who consider their time here more a calling than a job. Then, there are the lives those people have touched: our patients, caregivers, family members, advocates, funders and partners in care. Together, this synergy has propelled us to continue to serve our community and care for over 12,000 seriously ill community members.

Yet, while these individuals truly have and continue to be the cornerstone of our organization, I feel it is our collective will to reach our imagined future that continues to fuel this organization. The belief that home-based medicine will one day become the standard of care for the seriously ill, and not an offshoot of the medical community that it is today. That all people regardless of who they are will receive the same compassionate care when and where they need it. We are committed to working towards these goals and using the next 25 years to ensure that they become a reality. A sincere thank you to everyone who has believed in this work and continues to walk with us.

I hope you will be able to join us on October 13 as we celebrate 25 years of bringing health care home as well as the employees, volunteers, donors, partners and advocates who have made Housecall Providers such a jewel of our community.

Warmly,


Rebecca Ramsay, MPH

Traveling the path toward deeper connection

Few doctors can claim certified nursing assistant (CNA) on their resume, but luckily for Housecall Providers, our newest employee has worn the scrubs to prove it. Dr. Brian Leese joined Housecall Providers last month as our new hospice medical director, replacing Dr. Eric Walsh, who retired after two years of care and service. While Brian's two-year stretch as a CNA was at the beginning of his career, it planted the seeds for the position he holds today.

"I look back on the work as being so valuable and challenging," Brian says. "Being a CNA gave me an appreciation for the sheer amount of physical work it takes to keep eight sick patients clean, dry and fed."

Brian's interest in health care first came through organic farming, a passion that led him to choosing Evergreen State College for his undergraduate degree. The college had the distinction of being one of two campuses in the U.S. that had an organic farm. He studied agriculture and soil chemistry before shifting his focus to biology and health. His path led him to study naturopathic medicine and massage therapy before receiving his medical degree

from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Florida.

Fast forward to today, where Brian has worked as a physician at OHSU in various roles for the last ten years. First, completing his internal medicine residency, then as Chief Resident, and eventually as a hospitalist. Over his many years of experience, working with patients living with serious illness has had the greatest impact.

"While all the care delivered in medicine is vitally important, these relationships are one of the places where things often become most 'real,' where the truth is spoken and sometimes even the smallest thing like a conversation can become deeply meaningful," says Brian.



Housecall Providers' new
Hospice Medical Director,
Dr. Brian Leese.

This learning journey culminated with Brian completing a hospice and palliative care fellowship at OHSU in 2020. It also set the stage for his next chapter in serving those in need.

Next stop, Housecall Providers.

"Our organization has always been about really valuing community relationships. Brian embodies this commitment with his long-time work at OHSU as a resident, hospitalist and palliative care fellow," says Advanced Illness Medical Director Dr. Will Kennedy. "Best of all, his kind, mission-driven style fits perfectly into our culture and next chapters."

(See "Traveling the path" page 6)



Adult Care Home owner Roxana Tolan and her husband, Greg Deli, enjoying some well-deserved time off at Multnomah Falls.

For safety's sake – caregivers appreciate telehealth option

When COVID-19 began to make its way to the metro area this spring, we focused our preparations on how we would continue to care for our patients — the most vulnerable targets of the virus — while doing everything in our power to protect both them and staff members who would be going into their homes. We started making telephone visits and launched, within a month's time, a telehealth video platform called doxy.me.

While the switch to telehealth has been tough for some patients and caregivers who are not comfortable with the technology and don't use a computer or smartphone, most of our patients are able to have their medical needs addressed through a video house call. One segment of our caregivers, the adult care

home (ACH) owner/operators, are extremely grateful to have the doxy.me option since homes within Multnomah county are still in lockdown.

"Multnomah county ACHs are only allowing medical professionals through their doors and then, only if it is an emergency," says owner/

operator Roxana Tolan. Roxana and her husband Greg Deli own two ACHs next door to one another and specialize in caring for residents with behavioral and cognitive issues. Their residents are also high risk due to their multiple chronic conditions, so telehealth house calls have been welcomed and appreciated.

"The transition to telehealth has been wonderful," says Roxana. "Even before the pandemic, a couple of my residents would fear the doctor coming to see them because of the past traumas they experienced while institutionalized," says Roxana. "Over the phone or on video chat they do well because they are more comfortable."

Primary care provider Barb Sutton, APN agrees. "I find that with skilled caregivers, telehealth works well for some of the more apprehensive psychiatric patients," she says. "Before they wouldn't allow me to do much of a face-to-face exam, but now they are being engaged by the video and are more relaxed."

Most of the ACH owner/operators tell Barb they really like the telehealth option because it shows a commitment to keep their residents safe

(See "For safety's sake" page 6)



Family and friends came together online to honor the life of Jim Severine.

Death at a distance: How virtual memorials help families mourn amid a pandemic

Six months ago, Diane Severine never imagined that she would be holding a virtual memorial service for her husband, Jim. But in the last few months, many families have had to pivot towards technology-based solutions to honor their loved ones who have passed. Since early spring, the world has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to lost jobs, cancelled plans and a moratorium on gatherings of over ten people in many areas of the country. “We were uncertain how long it would be before we could have an in-person service for Jim,” says Diane, “so I felt a need to see if there was another option. I didn’t

expect perfection – but honoring Jim’s life was paramount.”

What is a virtual memorial service? Using video and internet broadcasting technology, families weave together a live sermon with pre-recorded statements from family members and slideshows of pictures of the deceased set to their favorite music. All this can be live streamed and hosted on the internet for loved ones and friends near and far to view at any time, even if they are unable to attend the event.

“We were lucky to find a professional videographer who worked with Jim’s sister, Jim’s

daughter and me to combine our family’s photos and recollections with Chaplain Dean’s amazing sermon to create something very meaningful.”

Still, some aspects of a traditional funeral are impossible to replicate in a virtual service. Nothing can replace being physically near the people we love during times of grief, but Diane noticed she didn’t miss a traditional funeral as much as she thought she would. “For me, the cards, the phone calls, and people’s presence after the funeral were what gave me strength.”

An online service has distinct benefits which may extend its adoption beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. The need to rethink the memorial service in general can lead to a more creative, personalized and individually meaningful ceremony. Friends and acquaintances from across the globe who might never have been able to travel to an in-person service are suddenly able to not only attend, but participate, sharing memories and reflections that might otherwise have gone unheard. The recording of the service can be made available to those not able to attend the live event, or who may want to revisit the ceremony. Other people’s

(See “Death at a distance” page 7)

Traveling the path (From page 3)

An East Coaster who has lived in three of the four corners of the country, Brian has a special connection with the Northwest. “I guess there are two aspects that really stand out,” says Brian. “The natural history – volcanoes, massive old growth trees, rocky coastlines – and the community’s values.”

Oregon has long prioritized health care as a human right. This includes meeting people “where they are” with their needs, a fundamental tenet of the Housecall Providers and CareOregon missions. “Whatever someone’s story, recognizing their intrinsic worth is often the first step towards healing,” says Brian.

This history helps make Portland one of the progressive cities leading the way towards a new way of looking at issues like substance use, poverty and race. “It heartens me to be connected to this type of caring community and being able to liaise with social services,” says Brian. “Getting my patients what they needed was one of the most satisfying aspects of being a hospitalist.”

He also fits within the Portland scene in another way too: a self-admitted science fiction buff who claims our city’s own Ursula Le Guin as one of his favorite authors. “I love all the classic novels, games like Dungeons and Dragons and the show ‘Doctor Who,’ which

I grew up watching on PBS,” says Brian, who can be seen in winter sporting a version of the 20-foot scarf the good doctor wore in the ‘70s show.

Still, it was the hospice staff’s reaction when they were introduced to Brian during the interview process that confirmed that he truly was the right person for the job. “It was beyond that they really liked him,” Will says, “it was more like ‘he is one of us.’” ■

For safety’s sake (From page 4)

while still being actively involved in their health care. She has made a few urgent visits when caregivers call with a problem, noting that in pre-COVID-19 times those visits would usually have been made 24 or more hours later.

Since seeing the same provider is critical for her residents to build trust and a connection, Roxana likes the stability of Housecall Providers. “We

don’t get tossed around with different providers and that is very important to me and our residents. If we go into a clinic setting where it is a different doctor each time, they don’t do well with that,” she says. Currently, all 10 of her residents are receiving medical care from Housecall Providers.

Roxana, who has been a caregiver most of her adult life, says that life has stayed

pretty normal in her adult care homes since the pandemic arrived in Oregon. “For us it wasn’t a big change when COVID-19 hit because the majority of my residents don’t have family that visit anyway,” says Roxana. “My husband and I are their family.” ■

Help us celebrate (From page 1)

purchased VIP passes to boogie down while plating their dinner prepared by Vibrant Table.

We are very excited to welcome back Dr. Tom Cornwell as our keynote speaker. A nationally recognized expert in home-centered medical care, Dr. Cornwell presented in 2014 at our Return of the House Call breakfast symposium. He is the Senior Medical Director of Village Medical at Home, and the executive chairman of the Home Centered Care Institute, the national nonprofit organization he founded in 2012.

“Having Tom be part of our 25th anniversary makes this extra special for us,” Ramsay says. “He has been such a strong supporter of our work and as a national leader he will speak to where our industry is heading and what we as providers can do to prepare for the wave.”

Our Keynote Speaker

A nationally recognized expert in home-centered medical care, Dr. Cornwell is the Senior Medical Director of Village Medical at Home and the executive chairman of the Home Centered Care Institute, the national nonprofit organization he founded in 2012.



Thomas Cornwell, M.D.

The 60-minute broadcast will also feature stories from our patients, families and staff, a silent auction, videos and numerous opportunities to support our continued work. A 30-minute dance after-party will conclude the affair.

“While we are disappointed to not celebrate this milestone in person, there is a silver lining,” says Ramsay. “In the past our caregivers, especially the adult care home operators, were not able to attend our events because of home commitments.

Now, this special community, as well as our national partners and friends, can enjoy the show from the comfort of their living rooms.”

What: The Housecall Providers 25th Anniversary House Party for House Calls Celebration

When: Tuesday, October 13, 2020, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Where: Via internet live stream on your computer or smartphone

Tickets: Free to the public.

Visit housecallproviders.org to buy VIP passes and review auction packages. ■

Death at a distance (From page 5)

comments about how they enjoyed the service made it even more meaningful to Diane.

Some families are combining a virtual memorial with an intimate in-person service for a small number of people. This way they benefit from the accessibility of the internet while still receiving

the in-person support they need. In these difficult times, we are all doing the best we can to strike a balance between risk, safety and caring for ourselves and our loved ones. Virtual memorials may not be perfect, but they are no less real, and incorporate many of the same elements and rituals as traditional funerals. “It

is very difficult to accept different ways of doing things, especially something as personal and traditional as a memorial service” says Diane. “This may not be everyone’s acceptable alternative, but for our family, it turned out to be a real blessing – and in my heart, I know my husband was honored.” ■

A big THANK YOU to our sponsors!

We'd like to thank these sponsors for supporting our 25th anniversary event, "House Party for House Calls." If you are interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Mary Finn at mfinn@housecallproviders.org or **971-202-5541**.

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