

Fall 2023

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 first-ever House Call Interdisciplinary Team of the Year includes (L to R) Ashley Schumacher, Gillian Beck van Heemstra, Crystal Delatorre and Cheryl Zechmann.

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Primary care team honored for excellence

The American Academy of Home Care Medicine (AAHCM) recently presented its inaugural House Call Interdisciplinary Team of the Year Award to a Housecall Providers Primary Care team, highlighting their outstanding contributions to home-based medical care.

Primary care's innovative approach, which emphasizes a team-based care model, has significantly enhanced the quality of health care delivered to homebound and seriously ill patients and emphasizes the importance of collaborative care in the field of home-based medicine.

Primary Care Provider Ashley Schumacher, NP, who previously worked with Housecall Providers,

returned to the organization because of the shift to collaborative care. "I came back only because of the new team-based care model. It's a totally different game having a team out there with me," said Ashley. "Before, I felt isolated and not as supported as I am now."

The Housecall Providers team recognized by AAHCM includes Ashley as Primary Care (See "Team honored" Page 7)



Rebecca Ramsay

CEO report

Greetings to our cherished community,

As we reflect on this year's journey in home-based medicine, I am filled with pride and gratitude for what Housecall Providers does, and for those who believe in us and support our mission in so many ways. Despite numerous challenges facing the healthcare industry, Housecall Providers hasn't just weathered the storm; we've thrived in it. This year our programs witnessed the highest census numbers in our history, and our path of growth promises even more.

This year, we expanded our advanced illness care program to Columbia and Clatsop Counties, extending essential medical services to those previously underserved. As we set our sights on 2024, we're excited about introducing our primary care program to Marion and Polk Counties, further enhancing our collaborative efforts with local nonprofits.

This year, Housecall Providers was also celebrated with the inaugural House Call Interdisciplinary Team of the Year award by the American Academy of Home Care Medicine – providing a testament to the commitment of our dedicated staff to providing superior care. Additionally, our hospice program has achieved recognition by earning four rings in the 2023 Quality Connections program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization – one of only two recipients in Oregon. All of us are so proud of these accomplishments!

Our community engagement initiative, launched in 2022, has solidified partnerships with numerous local nonprofits, bolstering our pledge to holistically serve our homebound and seriously ill members.

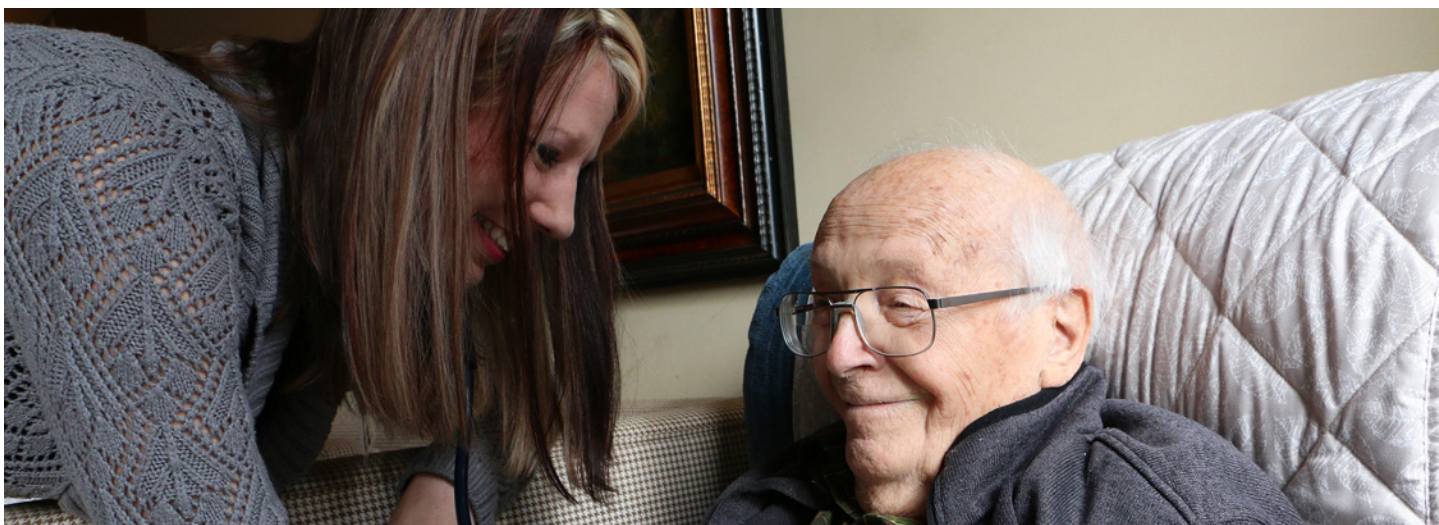
I'm also delighted to share our team's growth. We welcomed 30 new faces this year, taking our workforce count to 135. While recruitment remains a focal point, our retention rates proudly surpass industry averages.

The stories in this fall issue of The Patient's Advocate highlight why our nonprofit home-based medicine matters. I urge anyone curious or eager to deepen their involvement to reach out directly to our Senior Development Specialist Bruce Erickson at berickson@housecallproviders.org.

Your support shapes our impact on our most underserved neighbors. Thank you for your trust and commitment.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca". The script is fluid and cursive.



Quality Connections from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization stands as the sole national program specifically designed to support hospice and palliative care providers in delivering exceptional, patient-focused care.

Housecall Providers Hospice earns highest recognition

Housecall Providers Hospice has achieved a remarkable recognition by earning all four rings in the 2023 Quality Connections program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). This outstanding achievement places Housecall Providers Hospice among the top providers of high-quality, person-centered hospice and palliative care in Oregon.

Quality Connections stands as the sole national program specifically designed to support hospice and palliative care providers in delivering exceptional, patient-focused care. Housecall Providers Hospice now proudly joins the elite ranks as one of only two hospices in the state of Oregon to reach this notable accomplishment.

This accomplishment not only demonstrates the hospice's dedication to providing outstanding end-of-life care but also signifies its commitment

to staying current with the latest and best practices in the realm of serious illness and end-of-life care.

"This is an incredible achievement for our hospice, and it acknowledges and validates the clinical excellence we are committed to when caring for our hospice patients and families," said CEO Rebecca Ramsay, MPH.

The Quality Connections program revolves around four fundamental pillars, each symbolized by one of

the four rings: Education, Application, Measurement, and Innovation. Participants in Quality Connections are required to meet specific milestones within defined time frames by engaging in activities that promote high-quality care delivery and service excellence. These activities include quarterly data reporting, benchmarking, educational courses, case studies, and engagement on emerging issues.

Achievement in the program is gauged by the completion of activities within each of the four foundational areas, resulting in the closure of up to four rings, symbolizing a commitment to delivering the best care possible. ■



Deborah and Ron Threadgill have been supporting Housecall Providers' mission for over a decade.

Donor spotlight: A journey from employee to advocate

In most organizations, it's a rarity to discover individuals who remain closely connected long after they've departed – not the case for Deborah Threadgill. Deborah first connected as an employee. Now she and her husband Ron maintain that connection as long-time donors and supporters of the mission of Housecall Providers.

Deborah's story with Housecall Providers began in 2010, when Housecall Providers was in the much smaller SE Belmont Street office. Over five years, she worked as a Hospice Billing Specialist and formed strong bonds with staff members, many of whom still work at the organization and remember the joy and spirit she brought into the office every day.

"The people at Housecall Providers, they have heart and are fierce advocates for their patients," said Deborah. "They are fulfilling such a critical need in serving people who often can't get health care except at the hospital."

It isn't just friends that keep Deborah and Ron connected, though. They believe in the

work being done every day because Deborah has seen firsthand the impact of home-based medicine on the lives of homebound and seriously ill patients. They believe Housecall Providers is uniquely qualified to deliver the essential services that help the most at-risk individuals in our community live their best lives possible.

"We continue to support Housecall Providers because of the positive impact that in-home medical care has on countless families throughout the area," said Ron. "People can see that the staff are living and breathing the mission and values. Housecall Providers is an indispensable nonprofit."

Deborah and Ron's story is a great example of being committed not just to a job, but to a meaningful cause. Housecall Providers is very thankful for their strong support these many years and for sharing the vision of making a positive difference in one's community. ■

If you would like to make a donation or find out about other ways to support our mission, please visit housecallproviders.org or scan the QR code.





Tim Jones, who visits his wife Jackie twice a day at Pacific Gardens Alzheimer's Special Care Center, says the care that Jackie is receiving from Nurse Practitioner Barb Sutton is "beyond outstanding."

Husband feels like 'Christmas has arrived' after visits from nurse practitioner

Many caregivers for loved ones with dementia know the feeling of uncertainty and helplessness that often comes with the diagnosis. The weight is even greater for those who are managing it all alone, and the yearning to ensure your loved ones are receiving the best care possible can be overwhelming.

Tim Jones knows this feeling all too well. He gradually noticed that his wife Jackie was exhibiting signs of dementia. Last March, he realized just how serious her condition was. As he was taking a shower, Jackie unexpectedly drove off with the family car. He searched for her on foot and by car with the help of their neighbor, Shelly, but she was nowhere to be found.

The next morning, the sheriff's department contacted Tim to say that they found Jackie and had taken her to the ER. Jackie was in good spirits, but confused, bruised, and had a broken arm. For weeks she was attended to around the clock. "She was alive – thank God – but often had periods of anger," Tim recalled.

It was at this point that Shelly's sister Kelly recommended Pacific

Gardens Alzheimer's Special Care Center, and, after visiting, he agreed to have Jackie placed there. Tim and Jackie don't have family near, so Shelly and Kelly had been "his angels" throughout this trying time.

Tim visits Jackie twice a day – bringing ice cream and a cookie each time – and even a rose in the morning during good weather. He plays piano for the residents and deals High Card in the evenings. Jackie gained weight and her health improved since living in the care community. "She recognizes me every time I visit," said Tim. "She takes her medications regularly, and the caregivers and med techs are great."

About three months after moving in, Jackie began having digestive issues and had yet to be assigned a provider. A frustrating trip to the ER made Tim realize that Jackie couldn't wait any longer to receive primary care. Pacific Gardens recommended Housecall Providers, and from that point forward, Tim and Jackie's lives changed for the better.

Housecall Providers Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Barbara Sutton became Jackie's provider. "She is beyond outstanding and thoughtful," Tim said, "She's very sincere and has an answer for all my questions."

(See 'Christmas has arrived' Page 7)



Dorothy Davis poses surrounded by just a few of her amazing quilts.

Quilting through life's challenges

Listening to Dorothy Davis, 82, one gets a sense of a determined woman with an invincible spirit. Her life is a tale of creativity, drive, and resilience, and she now receives comfort and palliative care through the Housecall Providers Advanced Illness Care program.

The daughter and granddaughter of migrant workers, she's a natural when it comes to sewing, painting, beading, and her family's passion, quilting. Her talent in the latter turned her into a local legend once when she submitted a picture of one of her quilts to a quilting magazine, earning her the title of "The Quilt Lady in Remote Oregon."

Living in a very small town meant letters from admirers across the country always found their way to her – even without

an address. This recognition enabled her to sell her quilts and make a living from her art. Alongside her husband, Dorothy journeyed across the U.S. to Native American powwows, selling her bead and feather creations and regalia at the gatherings. Yet life threw its share of challenges at Dorothy, and she can remember times when being cold and hungry were part of her everyday life. Her art and the relationships it created nourished her through the tough times.

Dorothy was enjoying the good life, running and swimming regularly, until a surgery to repair a hernia resulted in serious complications, leading to weeks of hospitalizations and subsequent surgeries. This marked the beginning of her major health challenges.

In April 2021, Dorothy's healthcare journey took a turn toward Housecall Providers when her doctor at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center referred her to our Advanced Illness Care program. For Dorothy, the care she receives is a lifeline. "I feel greedy that I get to have the kind of care that they [her care team] give me," Dorothy reflects. "I feel very fortunate that I have them. They come and visit me, which is great because I feel lonely and isolated most days."

When her care team changed due to the program's expansion, Dorothy found comfort in her new nurse, Glory Coates, RN, who shares her passion for quilting. This connection not only eased the transition but also opened doors to future collaborations. Dorothy and Glory plan to quilt together, ensuring that art and the camaraderie continue to blossom.

(See "Quilting through life" Page 8)

Team honored (From Page 1)

Provider, Crystal Delatorre as Care Coordinator, Nurse Gillian Beck van Heemstra, and Social Worker Cheryl Zechmann. Their collective dedication to delivering patient-centered care has not gone unnoticed.

Pippa Shulman, President of AAHCM, expressed her excitement about the extraordinary work carried out by Housecall Providers and other healthcare teams across the nation. “This team is truly making a difference in the lives of their patients,” Shulman stated.

Housecall Providers has been a pioneer in embracing the value of teamwork in caring for homebound and seriously ill patients, incorporating care coordinators into their model more than two decades ago.

Over the last six years, the primary care practice has embraced an interdisciplinary, team-based care model, where patients are not just assigned a primary care provider but a comprehensive care team. This approach has not only improved patient care but also enhanced the satisfaction of caregivers and family members while promoting a supportive environment for its clinical team.

Crystal Delatorre emphasized the significance of collaboration within the interdisciplinary team. “When you can reach out to each other and get the support you need to care for our patients, it contributes to feeling less isolated,” she said.

The Housecall Providers team, which has worked together for over four years in various capacities, was nominated by

primary care leadership for their outstanding representation of team-based care for homebound and seriously ill patients. Primary Care Director Scott Paul, RN, commended the team's collective effort and their commitment to supporting each other, saying, “While the award honors particular staff, it acknowledges the collaborative spirit that runs through our entire organization.”

The recognition of Housecall Providers by AAHCM highlights the changes occurring within the healthcare industry, with team-based care models leading the way in delivering high-quality, patient-centered care. ■

'Christmas has arrived'

(From Page 5)

Tim appreciates how attentive Barbara is to Jackie, and that he is also consulted regarding his wife's condition. “After her visits, I feel like Christmas has arrived,” Tim said. His only regret is not having Barb Sutton as Jackie's provider prior to that one morning in March.

Tim's appreciation of Barbara and Housecall Providers is immense. And while Tim feels certain that all Housecall Providers' clinicians are at the top of their fields, he is grateful that it was Barbara that took on the role of caring for his wife.

“I say a short prayer each morning at the church next door for Jackie and others,”

Tim said, “and I make a point to include Barbara.” With Housecall Providers in his corner, Tim can rest easier knowing that he and his wife are in such good hands. ■

Quilting through life

(From Page 6)

Amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dorothy used her creative skills for the greater good, sewing over 600 masks to help community members protect themselves when masks were scarce.

More recently, when Dorothy expressed her desire to enter her quilts in Quiltopia Oregon but lacked the funds to do so, Glory submitted a request to the Housecall Providers Patient Assistance Fund. The approval

of her entrance fee expenses meant the world to Dorothy.

“It is a dream come true that my quilts will be seen by so many, since I have had them in bags for years,” she said.

As a fellow quilter, Glory is not just Dorothy’s nurse but also her advocate who understands the importance of embracing and supporting her patients’ creative spirit. Glory is excited to be bringing Dorothy’s four quilts to Salem for the event, a testament to the kind of care and compassion that

runs through all the Housecall Providers programs. Patients are individuals with unique stories and passions, deserving of support and understanding. Dorothy’s journey is a story of resilience, artistic expression, and the power of healthcare providers who go the extra mile to support their patients’ well-being. ■

If you are interested in contributing to the Housecall Providers Patient Assistance Fund, please contact Kim Swan at kswan@housecallproviders.org or 971-202-5551.