

Spring 2023

The Patient's Advocate

An update from a national leader in home-based medicine



**Housecall
Providers**

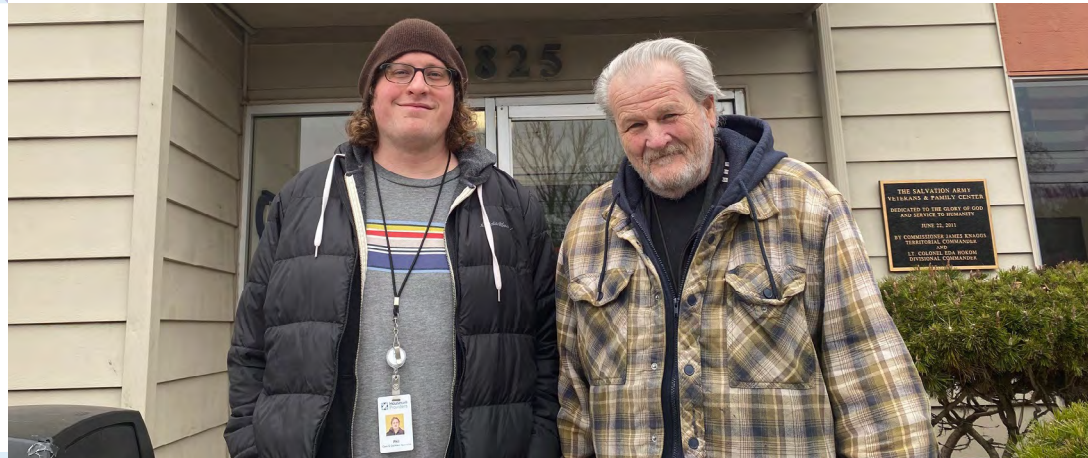
Part of the CareOregon Family

**Improving lives
by bringing
health care home**

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housecallproviders.org



Advanced Illness Care (AIC) staff member Phil Cleary stands with patient Richard Crowley in front of The Salvation Army Veterans and Family Center. A few weeks later, Richard moved into his own apartment.

Community comes together to support a veteran's health journey

As a Social Determinants Specialist for the Housecall Providers Advanced Illness Care (AIC) program, Phil Cleary is making a name for himself as someone that will stop at nothing to get his patients/clients everything they may need to support their health journey. Lately though, at least in the eyes of AIC patient Richard Crowley, he is entering into hero status.

"If Phil hadn't stepped into the picture, I probably wouldn't be here. I did the best I could to take care of myself, but I would likely be living in my car, and it would just go downhill from there," Richard said.

Late December 2021, on the verge of unconsciousness, Richard made a last-second decision to call a friend instead

of 911 to take him to the hospital because he was worried that emergency services wouldn't get to him in time. "I was living in my RV on the outskirts of Beaverton and my friend knew right where I was and could get to me fast," Richard said.

At the hospital Richard was diagnosed with COVID-19 and (See "Community comes together" Page 6)



CEO REPORT

Rebecca Ramsay, MPH

Dear patients, family members, caregivers and community supporters,

We enter 2023 with a collective sense of renewed energy, purpose and hopefulness. As the weather warms and spring unfolds, it is my hope that we can all begin to visualize a future where our community can come together to celebrate life, and, through engagement and connection, rediscover our common purposes. In the spring newsletter last year, I announced that Housecall Providers developed a community engagement program to help build a strong network of community partners, as well as to rebuild waning connections weakened by the pandemic. I said then, “First and foremost, we want to fine-tune our listening ear so we can truly absorb the exchanges and information that flow from the populations we serve. We want to make sure we hear what is truly being requested and how we can facilitate connections that address those needs.”

The pandemic is now entering its fourth year. Our virtual 25th anniversary event in 2020 was as close as we got to gathering together in person. And, frankly, we miss you. We miss the camaraderie, the support and the collective wisdom that real connection brings. With that in mind, we are asking for your feedback. As the backbone of our network of community supporters, we want to know if you are ready to gather together in person again, to share the triumphs and hardships of the past few years and to look forward to a new era of connecting. **You will find a QR code with a brief explanation of the survey it links to on page 8 of this newsletter.** Sharing your thoughts will only take a few minutes, and your voice will help us build the connections that bring health care home.

Through patience, kindness, compassion and authenticity, community connections are built and strengthened. Through these connections, resilience is fostered. And with resilience, we thrive. This issue of The Patient’s Advocate contains a series of stories focused on how connection improves, enriches, and even saves our patients’ lives, as well as those of our extended community.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca".

Rebecca

Donor, volunteer, partner, ambassador

When caring for her father became less about spending quality time together and began to feel more like running a taxi service to and from doctor's appointments, Sandy Hise found Housecall Providers. She has stayed connected to our organization in the ten years since.

Hearing Sandy describe the fondness her father, Don, had for Alex, his primary care provider, one can't help but be infected with her cheery optimism and appreciation for Housecall Providers. Sandy recalls how Don and Alex would tell each other stories and laugh deep belly laughs, and how Don's quality of life (and Sandy's by extension) was improved by his in-home medical care.

"I remember how Alex would come in and check on dad regularly; he would sit there like his buddy and talk with him," Sandy explains. "Dad was a great storyteller, so the two of them had a lot of fun together sharing life stories and so forth."

After Don passed, Sandy became a regular donor and



Remembering the happy times together, Sandy Hise shares a selfie with her father, Don Bower.

signed up to be a volunteer. For several years she enjoyed her connection with the organization she supports as a donor, volunteer and ambassador.

The pandemic took its toll on the connection, though. With only virtual events to keep her connected over the past three years, and with a busy schedule of her own, split between the Oregon coast, the Portland metro region, and Lake County in southern Oregon, Sandy hasn't been able to celebrate Housecall Providers' mission with other supporters in person, and agrees it's time to change that.

When asked if she is ready to attend a live event, Sandy replies, "I am really tired of Zoom meetings. I have a woman's group that has been meeting twice a month for nine years. During covid we started doing Zoom calls and we got sick

of it. And now we are back together in person. The personal connection makes a difference."

Community support means more than just being a donor or a volunteer, even though those are critical roles. It also means bringing people together to celebrate the organizations like Housecall Providers that form the community networks of care that hold us together.

While Sandy is ready to get together in person, we understand that this is a complicated issue. We would love to hear from supporters and ambassadors like you: What are your thoughts are on celebrating together? Please visit the link on page 8 and take our supporter survey to let us know how you feel. If there is enough interest, you may be able to meet Sandy and other supporters of Housecall Providers at a live event this year! ■



Sarah Jo Tomlin heads Housecall Providers' new behavioral health program.

New behavioral health program supports patients' overall health

Sarah Jo Tomlin, LCSW, loves her job as therapist and leader of Housecall Providers' new behavioral health program. When describing the power of behavioral health care, Sarah Jo says, "It's important that my patients know they aren't being judged. And more than knowing, you can tell when they start to internalize it, to feel it," she says. "When a patient really feels that connection, their outcomes show it. Relationships are what it is all about."

Launched in the summer of 2022, the Housecall Providers behavioral health program takes a holistic approach to care and completes an important loop with our patients. Behavioral health addresses and promotes the mental and emotional well-being of patients, including the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders. Because mental and emotional

health affect physical health as well as quality of life, being able to connect behavioral health to primary care makes both more effective.

Sarah Jo explains, "I love that I can send a message to my patient's primary care provider and they know me." The program strengthens the communication between the patient and the Housecall Providers primary

care team. She continues, "I can say to the provider, 'This person isn't sleeping, they need some help with that.' Or I can ask the patient, 'Is it ok if I tell Dr. Jossi what you just told me? Because it sounds like something she could help you with.'"

Sarah Jo connects with the Housecall Providers nurses too. A patient might have a rash on their foot and may not have told anyone else. Sarah Jo says, "I often ask questions like, 'Have you told your care team about this?' And the patient might say, 'No, I haven't yet. I was embarrassed or I haven't seen her yet.'" Then, with the patient's approval, she contacts the nurse on the patient's care team. Sarah Jo is on the front line, getting important care information to the patients' providers. Reflecting on the importance of that connection, she says, "I think it is a big deal. I think it is important. Closing the loop improves outcomes and it also builds trust."

The benefits of the Housecall Providers behavioral health program have quickly become apparent in patients' health outcomes. Homebound individuals and seriously ill members of our community often face especially difficult mental health challenges while coping with their circumstances. Offering our patients a trusted therapy option is an important tool in our approach to holistic care. ■

Partner spotlight: Community for Positive Aging

The Community for Positive Aging (CPA) is a caring and engaged organization that encourages intergenerational relationships, recognizes the wisdom and experience of community elders, and demonstrates awareness and respect for the aging process.

Formerly called the Hollywood Senior Center, the CPA was started in Portland's Hollywood district in 1973. In 2021, they changed their name and expanded to include the Giving Tree, an organization that provided arts and other programming to low-income housing units. The CPA is funded through a combination of state and local government grants, private grants and individual donations.



Kaylyn Peterson, CPA center manager, greets visitors in front of the building.

In addition to offering events, the CPA also provides enhanced resident services to eight low-income housing buildings throughout Portland, as well as tax assistance, a foot care clinic, technology ambassadors to help with computer literacy, transportation fare assistance, caregiver support and weekly food pantries.

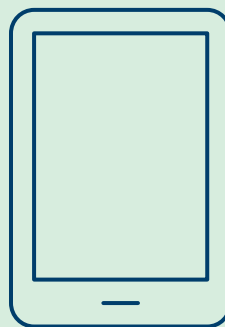
The CPA offers several of their educational and exercise programs both in person and online. They work hard to

ensure their services reach as many people as possible by broadcasting many of their offerings live on Zoom. Most of the online offerings are clearly marked on their calendar of events, but if you have any questions they are happy to take phone calls at 503-288-8303.

The CPA's educational and recreational programs include in person and online tai chi and arthritis exercise classes, walking groups, conversations on aging discussion groups, a new storytelling class, a ukulele group (join them every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.!), and free movies at the Hollywood Theater every month. One thing that makes them unique is that their classes and events are peer-led, taught by participants of the CPA. View their events calendar at communityfpa.org/events-calendar/ ■

Update your information

Housecall providers is updating our technology to send reminders and consents by text or email. If you or a family member are one of our primary care patients, please share your preferred cell phone number or email address with us next time you speak with one of our schedulers or care coordinators so the information can be saved in your chart.



Community comes together...

(From page 1)

pneumonia. Those conditions coupled with a pulmonary embolism caused by blood clots forming throughout his body required that he be hospitalized for nearly three months. Upon release and needing to be on oxygen to manage his newly developed COPD, the same friend took him in so he could further convalesce. “I only stayed with her for a month before I was back living in my car in front of the autobody garage where I had been a night watchman,” he said.

The shop owner allowed Richard to plug his oxygen concentrator into an inside outlet which snaked through a window and into his car to help him while he slept. This, too, was going to be temporary though since the building was under contract to soon be sold.

A CareOregon member for years, Richard was assigned a respiratory therapist who quickly realized that more support was needed to help him manage his serious condition. Shortly thereafter the referral was made to the AIC program and nurse Sarah Vinopal and Phil visited Richard at the lot in front of the garage.

“Rick is a fighter and a survivor through and through,” says

Phil. “He has adapted and found ways to keep going after he could no longer afford his last apartment, however many years ago.”

After speaking with Richard, the team learned that he was a honorably discharged Vietnam Veteran, so, with Richard’s blessing, Phil started to engage with Veteran Services with the goal of getting him a DD214 (the form needed to verify military service for benefits), a process that took upwards of three months. “I had been playing with the VA for a long period of time – trying to get some kind of help from them,” Richard said, “but when Phil got involved, things started happening.”

Even before the paperwork was completed, Phil had lined up an interview with staff from The Salvation Army Veterans and Family Center hoping to get Richard temporary housing while

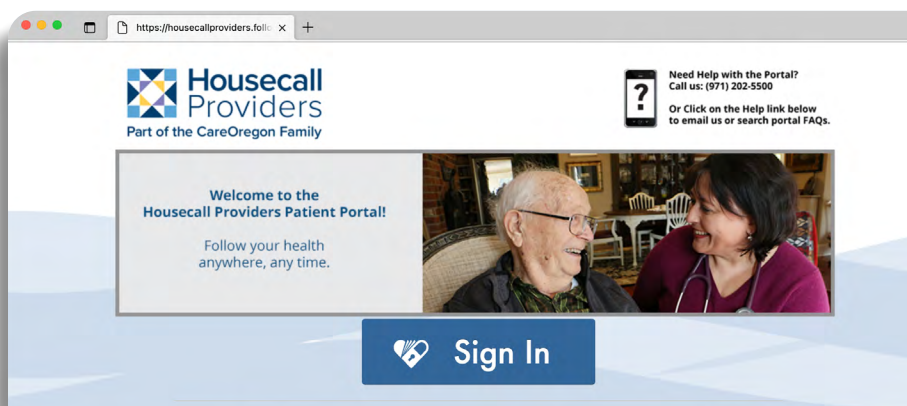
he also worked on obtaining the ultimate goal, a Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing voucher.

“We did a brief interview during their drop-in time and filled out the pre-intake paperwork,” says Phil. “He was then invited for a formal interview with eight people and the Major who runs the center. He really charmed them so they wanted to take him immediately, but they couldn’t until he proved he was enrolled in the VA.”

With the help of Sage Takayama, the Salvation Army’s Veterans Service Officer (VSO), Phil obtained Richard’s DD214 at the end of last August and he was able to move into the center just days before he needed to vacate the lot where he was parking at night. Eventually, he not only received the voucher enabling him to move into his own apartment last February, but discovered with the help of his

Follow your health anywhere, any time

Interested in setting up a **patient portal** account for yourself or a loved one? Please contact your care team to start the process.



case manager, that he qualified for a VA pension because of his service-related health conditions.

“I didn’t realize I was even eligible for a pension,” said Richard “but Sage did some research into my service record and told me that I was and that I should file some claims.”

Sarah and AIC Social Worker Karin Weaver have also been instrumental in Richard’s post-hospital care this past year. They check in on him regularly and accompany him to medical appointments ensuring that he understands the information and orders put forth by his doctors. They also support him by providing disease and symptom management education so his plan of care can be followed.

“My doctor told me that it would be a long, long, road to recovery and I am so appreciative of Sarah, Karin and Phil’s support because they really get me,” said Richard. With the wraparound palliative care support that the AIC team delivers, Richard can rest assured knowing the team will be with him helping to ensure he experiences the best possible quality of life along the way.

“It makes me proud to do the work that I do,” said Phil. “I get some pretty tangible feedback that my working hours are often well spent on trying to lift people into better circumstances” ■



Are you a veteran who has time to spend with another veteran?
We’d love to hear from you.

Are you a veteran interested in helping other veterans?

Our hospice team is seeking veterans who want to volunteer to spend time with our patients who have served. Veterans in hospice often find themselves coping with emotions and memories that can leave them feeling isolated and struggling alone with their feelings — and no one understands this better than a fellow person who served.

“*Nobody exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism more deeply or profoundly than the men and women who served.*”

The need is great and the reward — for both our patients as well as our volunteers —

is immeasurable. You can make a difference. Volunteering with Housecall Providers Hospice can provide veterans going through a very difficult time with the company of someone who has lived a shared experience. If you or someone you know is interested in this opportunity, please contact our volunteer coordinator Todd Lawrence at tlawrence@housecallproviders.org, call him at 971-202-5515, or use the volunteer contact page on our website.

Please also share this with any veterans you may know who might be interested in an opportunity like this. Thank you for your support. ■



**Housecall
Providers**

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We would love to hear from you!

It has been too long since we gathered together in person to celebrate and support the mission of Housecall Providers. While we had a wonderful time celebrating our 25th anniversary with a virtual gala in the fall of 2020, it just wasn't the same without all the people who have helped make Housecall Providers the nonprofit community asset it is today.

Here's where you come in: Before planning to host either a fundraising or donor engagement event, we want to gauge your interest in attending an in-person event this year. If interest is high, we may plan two events to come together and celebrate what we have achieved. Your feedback and ideas will enable us to make our 2023 event(s) accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Please take a moment to scan the QR code or use the following link to take our survey:
housecallproviders.org/connections/



If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Barb Gorman at bgorman@housecallproviders.org or 971-202-5535. From all of us at Housecall Providers, thank you so much for your input. ■