

## Palliative care expert leads medical team

Photo: Andie Petkus

Housecall Providers' new Medical Director, Dr. Pamela Miner, has her father to thank as one of those who inspired her to pursue a career in medicine with a focus on palliative care.

Dr. Miner's father was a practicing general internist in Wisconsin. He would come home some days after visiting one of his patients in the intensive care unit and tell his family about how little the person he saw resembled the patient he knew for so many years. He liked to share stories about his patients with others in his practice because "he wanted the medical staff to know the patient as the person he knew before he or she had become so ill."

Dr. Miner was impressed by the attention he gave his patients and says it served as a catalyst for her to seek a career in the relatively new medical specialty, palliative care. She earned her medical degree from Northwestern University's Medical School in Chicago, IL. After graduating, she completed one year of residency before transferring to Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess, a Harvard institution, completing an internal medicine program.



*Dr. Pamela Miner visits with Housecall Providers patient Vivian Genser during a recent examination.*

"Through medical school and both residency programs, I worked with VA patients and found the mission to be one that resonated with me," Dr. Miner stated. Her first job was as a primary care provider for the Boston Veterans Administration, in an outpatient

clinic in Worcester about an hour outside the city.

Dr. Miner enjoyed the conversations she had with her patients, mostly WWII veterans. She would ask them questions like, "How was the hospital stay for you? Do you see yourself getting better?" This is the language of palliative care, which she introduced into her work when appropriate. As the number of these interactions grew, so did her desire to delve deeper into palliative medicine.

Seeking further education in palliative care, she returned to

### Gratitude . . .

Donors to Housecall Providers are valued partners in helping us continue to provide excellent patient-centered care. To view a list of our 2014 donors, please visit page six.

From the Executive Director

## *Housecall Providers' success tied to 20 years of widespread support*

In 2015, we celebrate our 20th year of providing home-based primary medical care to the people of the greater Portland area. In that time, we have delivered over 133,000 house calls to more than 7,000 medically complex



or disabled homebound individuals. I can say with complete sincerity, that if it were not for the people who believed in our work these last

two decades, and so generously donated their time, talent and financial resources, Housecall Providers would not be in existence today!

This issue of *Vital Signs* honors those donors and the important role they have played in helping to shape Housecall Providers into a nationally recognized leader in home-based primary medical care. As you will see from the list, many have been dedicated donors

for years. Thank you everyone for your commitment to our mission.

Our future relies on more people realizing and supporting the incredible work being accomplished right here in their own backyard. We constantly receive high marks from our patients, their family members and/or caregivers. Nonetheless, in order to be able to serve the people of Portland for another 20 years and more, the time has come to share the story of Housecall Providers with a much broader audience.

The success we have experienced is drawing other practices into the marketplace and we need to be proactive in how to deal with this competition. Where once we were the only organization focused on providing quality medical services to homebound individuals, now other health care businesses are entering the arena too.

In order to remain at the leading edge of this very specialized field, we need additional resources to support our ongoing recruiting efforts so we can continue to expand our services, while

keeping excellent patient-centered care at the forefront of all our decisions. The competition for top health care talent is heating up, and we too must offer attractive compensation packages to our candidates. In addition, we want to retain the skillful and committed staff we have now.

Your continued support will fuel Housecall Providers' future growth and bring our highly effective services to even more vulnerable members of our community.

To the next 20 years!

— Terri Hobbs, Executive Director

## Memorial giving, a way for families to give back

The weeks before a homebound member of our community becomes a Housecall Providers patient can be some of the most trying and difficult times for a family. Usually, the soon-to-be patient experiences a health crisis that leaves relatives scrambling to figure out the best options available.

Marilyn Fink and her family know this scenario all too well. Two years ago when her mother-in-law, Irene, had a sudden health complication requiring hospitalization, it became clear she would be unable to return to the facility where she and her husband had lived for years. Hospital staff suggested another placement and Irene moved in,

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# Pilot program inspires innovation

By Todd Lawrence, Volunteer Coordinator

I strongly suspect that any person reading these words already knows Housecall Providers is one of Portland's most innovative healthcare providers. As a member of the Housecall Providers team, I take great pride in our organization. Were you also aware that Housecall Providers boasts one of the region's most innovative volunteer programs?

The fact that our volunteers serve members of our primary care population truly sets us apart from our peers in the healthcare field. Think about it... does your primary care doctor offer volunteer services? It's certainly not the norm, but because our patient population is comprised entirely of homebound and disabled members of our community, Housecall Providers is far from the average practice. In this population, the need for companionship, assistance, emotional support and family respite is ever-present.

As volunteer coordinator, I would love to take credit for having the vision to create this program, but the credit truly belongs to the Housecall Providers leadership team. They established our volunteer program just over five years ago when Housecall Providers expanded its services to include hospice care. It was partially a matter of necessity, as Medicare guidelines require that all hospices offer volunteer services to their patients. But, did it make sense to send volunteers to our patients at the end-of-life, while ignoring the fact that our other patients were often as isolated and their caregivers just as exhausted?

A little over two years ago, we quietly began a pilot program that matched volunteers to our primary care patients.



*Volunteer Coordinator Todd Lawrence and Susie Thurston, one of Housecall Providers' first primary care volunteers.*

It was slow-going at first, as potential volunteers had no frame of reference to draw upon. It is far easier to recruit hospice volunteers, as most people know what hospice volunteering entails. Once we explained the need and introduced volunteers to our patients, the program began to take off. In fact, instead of pulling volunteers away from hospice, it has helped us grow our hospice program by keeping more volunteers actively engaged throughout our extensive service area. Additionally, as time has passed, we've even begun to see some of our primary care patients come to hospice with a well-established volunteer relationship already in place.

One example of this was our patient "Bobbie" and her volunteer Susie. They were one of our first primary care matches and they stayed together for the whole of the last two years of Bobbie's life. Even as Bobbie's health became unpredictable and caused her to switch repeatedly from hospice and primary care, Susie remained a constant in her life. Allowing for this kind of

continuity builds deeper volunteer/patient connections and in the process, strengthens and deepens the level of care we are able to offer.

I will never forget the day, three years ago, when I first interviewed to lead the volunteer program for Housecall Providers and Hospice Director Rebecca Ashling laid out the vision for the program. I was looking for a challenge, but I will admit the proposition of adding an additional 1,300 patients to my potential caseload of 100 was daunting. I am glad that I embraced the task; it continues to motivate me and give my days a sense of purpose that few people are afforded in their work.

Though relatively still in its infancy, the primary care part of our volunteer program has grown steadily and currently rivals our hospice program in size. Still, we have a ways to go until every one of our patients who needs a volunteer is able to be matched with one. Given this, if you or someone you know would like to volunteer to serve one of our primary care or hospice patients, please contact me at 971-202-5515 or [tlawrence@housecallproviders.org](mailto:tlawrence@housecallproviders.org).

*We've begun to see our primary care patients come to hospice with a well-established volunteer relationship already in place.*

## Founder Husted recognized for her life's work

**D**r. Benneth Husted, founder and former medical director of Housecall Providers, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Home Care Medicine. Dr. Husted, who retired from Housecall Providers last fall, was recognized via video by Dr. Tom Cornwell, President of the Academy. The award ceremony took place at "One Woman's Vision," an event in Portland honoring Dr. Husted and her many contributions in aiding the homebound, medically fragile members of our community.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) surprised the 200-plus attendees at the Multnomah Athletic Club with a personalized video message thanking the doctor for her "vision, courage and tenacity" as well as sharing his hope that "after a well-earned sabbatical, you will continue to dedicate your time as an advocate for increasing awareness of home-based medicine."

Dr. Husted founded Housecall Providers in 1995 with a small staff and a shoestring budget. Today, it is a \$9 million organization, employing a staff of 91 and offering primary, transition and hospice care services to its nearly 1,400 patients across the metropolitan area.



*Dr. Benneth Husted and Terri Hobbs.*

**Want to learn even more about Housecall Providers?** Visit our website and sign up for our e-newsletter, which is packed with more news about our leading edge medical team.



## Yana Kindrachuk newest Dream Team member

**T**he latest member of our team to be named to the Oregon Hospice Dream Team is Yana Kindrachuk, a certified nursing assistant (CNA) for Housecall Providers Hospice. Her selection was announced last fall at an award ceremony held September 30, in Bend, OR. The ceremony, part of the annual Oregon Hospice Conference, honors individuals who exemplify the best in quality hospice care. Housecall Providers' first Dream Team selectee was Volunteer Coordinator Todd Lawrence, who made the team last year.

A special skill set that Kindrachuk brings to her work is being fluent in Russian. The ability to speak two languages has been a great asset when delivering care to Russian patients who are not bilingual. In such instances, first encounters are smoothed over as soon as she starts conversing to patients in their native tongue. Her calm and comfortable manner puts all at ease, especially those patients who are particularly stressed or worried.



Photo: Courtesy Oregon Hospice Association

*Mary Ballantyne, RN; Housecall Providers Corporate Compliance Officer, Yana Kindrachuk; and Deborah Jacques, CEO Oregon Hospice Association; pose after Kindrachuk's selection to the OHA Dream Team.*

## Business Journal cites Housecall Providers' innovative culture

**T**he *Portland Business Journal* named Housecall Providers as one of the winners of its Innovative Businesses of the Year award. Executive Director Terri Hobbs was on hand to receive the award at an event in November hosted by the Business Journal. Housecall Providers was selected from among candidates in the category of 51-100 employees. Other honorees in the spotlight for their creativity included the Portland Timbers, Barre3, Certified Languages International and Treehouse.

"It was wonderful to be noticed by the Portland business community for creating and sustaining such a much needed service," Hobbs said.



# housecall providers

bringing health care home



WE HAVE MADE OVER  
**133,000**  
HOUSE CALLS

AND SERVED MORE THAN

**7,000**

PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



The average age of our patients is

**79**

We currently have **21** patients who are at least **100** years old



2014

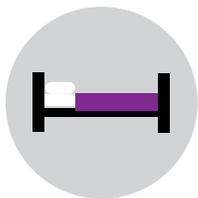
**519**

NEW PATIENTS

**11,800+**  
HOUSE CALLS



Surveys show that over 95% of our patients have been satisfied or highly satisfied with our services



In 2014, Housecall Providers experienced a 10% 30-day hospital readmission rate while the Medicare average in Oregon is 16%



Most of our patients, the homebound and disabled, fall into the 5% of the Medicare population that utilizes nearly 50% of its funds. Our goal for every patient remains the triple aim:

**Better Care, Better Health, Delivered at a Lower Cost**

## Providers Circle

**We invite you to join this committed group of individual donors who gave us \$1,000 or more during the year.**

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The Legacy Fund pays tribute to our founder's vision for Housecall Providers. Gifts totaling more than \$50,000 to date will assist in the recruitment, training and retention of high quality house call clinicians. We welcome your support of this critical and growing need.

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*Continued on next page*

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Fulfilling our mission is not possible without you. In order to provide our patients with personalized services and support, as well as meeting the emerging needs of an ever increasing homebound population, we depend on your generosity.

- Make a gift today at [www.housecallproviders.org](http://www.housecallproviders.org)
- Explore volunteer opportunities
- Consider a bequest to Housecall Providers
- Connect your business, civic or philanthropy networks to Housecall Providers
- Sign up for the **Community Rewards** program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Housecall Providers at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards)
- Learn how you can donate your vehicle: [housecallproviders.org/events/donate-your-vehicle](http://housecallproviders.org/events/donate-your-vehicle)

**Questions?** Contact Susan Ehrman, Director of Development, at 971-202-5534 or [sehrman@housecallproviders.org](mailto:sehrman@housecallproviders.org).

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*Although we make every effort to ensure that all information is accurate, there may be errors in this list.*

*We regret any omissions, misspellings or other mistakes and welcome your feedback.*

*Please contact Susan Ehrman, Director of Development, at 971-202-5534 or [sehrman@housecallproviders.org](mailto:sehrman@housecallproviders.org).*

## Honoring our loved ones

*Housecall Providers received gifts in honor and in memory of the following individuals.*

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Myrtle Strong  
Brian Teasdale  
Marie Terzian  
Betty Wachter  
Johnny Wallis  
Daisy "Sissy" White  
Lucille Wilberger  
Johanna Willemsen  
Dave & Nellie Willhelm  
Ethel "Jean" Young  
Philomena Zuber



## Fundraising expert leads development efforts

**S**usan Ehrman is a 30-year veteran of the non-profit management world. After earning a degree in anthropology from Macalester College, Ehrman started her fundraising career at three universities in Boston, including Harvard Law School. She has worked with a variety of organizations over the years, including 15 years as Director of Development for Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region. Born and raised in Portland, OR, Ehrman left the sunny climes of North Carolina and returned to her hometown to be closer to family and the Pacific Ocean.

We sat down with Ehrman to discuss her new role as Director of Development for Housecall Providers, and to catch a glimpse of her vision for the future of fundraising at Housecall Providers.

**Q: What is your role at Housecall Providers?**

**A:** My job is to give people who care about our

mission the opportunity to support us and guarantee we'll be around for a long time.

**Q: Why is it important for Housecall Providers to have a fundraising program?**

**A:** While Housecall Providers receives insurance reimbursement for many aspects of its work, it does not cover the full cost of providing our unique set of services. Gifts from the community fill in the gap, and ensure that our holistic approach to healthcare is available to those who would otherwise not have access.

**Q: What future projects are you most excited about?**

**A:** We want to make it easy for our supporters to give, whether that be through our monthly giving program, contributing appreciated stock, or leaving a bequest in their will. Housecall Providers is an innovative organization, so there are several exciting opportunities on the horizon!

**Q: What drew you to this work? Why Housecall Providers?**

**A:** To be an effective fundraiser, I believe you must feel passionate about the mission you are serving. I was originally drawn to health care, and specifically hospice, because my mother died when I was young and these options were not available. At Housecall Providers, it's about making sure that an underserved population has choices and access to good health care. In many ways, what we provide is so simple, but incredibly powerful.

# "Miss Jean, Chris is here!"

By Christina Gage, Volunteer

My phone chimes and the pop-up notice displays simply... Jean, reminding me that it's time to get on the road. I hardly need the prodding, for Wednesday has quickly become my favorite day of the week. When I enter Adella's Adult Foster Home, the women she cares for are sitting around the dining table in the cozy, warm common area, finishing up their breakfast. I am always struck by how perfectly kept this home is, how



Volunteer Christina Gage and Jean Turvey enjoying a Wednesday morning together.

comfortable all its residents appear, and how welcoming Adella is to me. All of my preconceived notions about care facilities were quickly forgotten when I began visiting Jean. "Miss Jean, Chris is here!" Adella says with an enthusiastic smile and then quickly gets Jean settled back in her room for our visit.

From her recliner near the window, my hostess directs me. "Get the folding chair from behind the door and put it right here close to me so I can hear you." Once we are knee to knee, the conversation just flows. I learn something new about Jean every week. From her memories of childhood spent in the tiny parish of Shipdham in Norfolk county England, where she and her 11 siblings watched soldiers march through the streets during WWII; to the 10-day journey by ship and train that brought her to America and the Pacific NW at the age of 26; to meeting her husband George at church, marrying him on New Year's Eve not long after, raising their

three boys, and laying him to rest after 39 years of marriage. These are just a few of the stories she has shared and our hour together always flies by.

There are some days though when reminiscing isn't as important and other things fill our time. Smoothing out the sweater that has become bunched up uncomfortably between her back and chair, holding her calendar while she circles the current date in order to "get caught up," being her scribe as she dictates letters to friends and family, adjusting the photos of grandchildren that adorn her walls, Googling the latest news about the Royal Family, teaching me about the proper balance of carrots and peas for the perfect cottage pie, and searching for her knitting that's gone missing. These are the things she needs from me on those days.

Recently, Jean learned that she would be moving off of hospice and back to primary care. "Will you still be allowed to visit me?" she asked. "As a volunteer, I get to visit you no matter what," I assured her. "Good. I look forward to Wednesdays." I smiled and said "So do I, Jean. It's my favorite day."



Photo: Tom Fink

Irene thoroughly enjoying a moment with her great-granddaughter, Emily.

she received prompted the Fink family to designate memorial gifts to Housecall Providers. "Irene had been through so much before we found Housecall Providers. We couldn't have done it without their supportive staff and we wanted to give something back to the organization that had given so much to us," Marilyn said.

## Memorial giving *Continued from page 2*

but shortly thereafter, her family realized it wasn't a good fit.

"At one point, I was in the hallway in tears and Pam Bacon, a nurse from Providence, stopped me and asked if there was anything she could do to help. I said that we just can't seem to get the care we need for our family member and she said, 'You need to call Housecall Providers,'" Marilyn remembered.

After researching Housecall Providers, Marilyn knew this was exactly the kind of care her mother-in-law needed. She called and in a month's time, Irene was on service. Her new primary care provider, JC Provost, DNP, FNP-C, recommended another facility where she would receive greater

attention, and because it had a memory care unit, her husband could join her there too.

"The staff of Housecall Providers made it so easy for us. If a medication needed tweaking, or we thought she might have an infection – right away, they were on it," Marilyn stated.

"This period can be such a tough time in peoples' lives," she continued. "If you can't take care of your family member at home, you want them to be loved and cared for at the highest level and that is exactly what Irene and our family received from Housecall Providers."

Irene passed away last December on Housecall Providers Hospice. The care and attention

# Palliative care expert

Photo: Andie Petkus

*Continued from page 1*

Harvard for a one-year fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Care. “It was the best decision I ever made,” she said. “I appreciated the program because it had such a strong mental health component. The clinicians learned how to help patients understand that emotions, not only their bodies, but mind and spirit, played into what was happening with them.”

By the time her fellowship was complete, the new specialty had announced its first board examination, and health care systems were recognizing the benefits to patient care. She came west to Portland to be part of the growing conversation here about hospice and palliative care.

“There is a really strong palliative community here that is collaborative in terms of supporting one another across institutions,” she said. “Portland has been a leader in palliative medicine with Dr. Susan Tolle at OHSU credited for the creation of the POLST (Physician Order for Life Sustaining Treatment), Jocelyn White and her work at Hopewell House, and Dr. Woody English and his efforts at Providence St. Vincent, so that made it an easy choice.”

In 2008, Dr. Miner was hired as a hospice and palliative care physician for Portland Providence, which meant she was half-time in both hospice and Connections, their inpatient palliative care service. In 2011, she moved full-time to Connections. Last fall, she joined the team at Housecall Providers, stepping into the role left when founder Dr. Husted retired.

## Palliative Care and Consultations

Dr. Miner said palliative care began as a patient-driven movement to gain control over their medical treatment.



*Dr. Pamela Miner*

“The highly technical medical treatments are great, but when they can’t really cure you anymore, the burdens of it become very heavy. Patients want to be able to have conversations about all their options for care and make good choices for themselves,” she said.

A palliative care consultation creates a space where the patient, family members, and caregivers come together to discuss treatment. There, they learn not only what’s happening to the patient medically, but what the patient believes is important and of value to them.

“We are trying to help the patient have a conversation about the balance between the burdens and benefits of treatment and care. When it is unlikely the patient can be cured, we begin to look at helping them maintain a good quality of life that they will find acceptable,” she explained.

## Housecall Providers ahead of the curve

Since 1995, Housecall Providers has been delivering primary medical care in the home along with a few specific services that fall under a palliative care umbrella. Among

“I appreciated the program because it had such a strong mental health component. The clinicians learned how to help patients understand their emotions, not only their bodies, but mind and spirit.”

– Dr. Pamela Miner

those are social work support, access to a spiritual counselor, and, of course, Housecall Providers Hospice, launched in 2009.

But within the last few months, an initiative to create an interdisciplinary palliative care team has started gaining ground, spurred on by the addition of Dr. Miner to the organization.

“Because of the patient population we serve, our clinicians have been providing a level of palliative care since the beginning of our practice,” said Primary Care Program Director Mary Sayre, RN. “What we are focusing on now is looking at the available resources to build an interdisciplinary team that will support all of our patients’ palliative care needs. Using this type of team approach will help clinicians care for some of our most complex primary care patients,” she said.

It’s the Housecall Providers way: push the envelope to further serve patients. Now, Dr. Pamela Miner is on call to lead the way to an interdisciplinary palliative care team, another groundbreaking development for Housecall Providers.

# housecall providers

Housecall Providers, Inc.  
5100 SW Macadam Ave., Ste. 200  
Portland, OR 97239

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

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## Housecall Providers Hospice is a labor of love.

**A**s a mission-driven nonprofit, our staff understands that, throughout a lifetime, everyone chooses their own path. As a life draws to its close, those decisions become ever more significant. When you select our hospice during this important time, you can rest assured knowing that your wishes, or those of a loved one, will be honored every step of the way.

Together with our clinical staff, we listen, observe, validate and educate patients, families and caregivers through one of the most sacred and intimate times of life.

Housecall Providers Hospice:  
**We honor your choices.**

### Our mission

**Housecall Providers** is dedicated to providing quality home-centered medical care, integrating primary, palliative and hospice services for homebound members of our community. We offer compassionate physical, emotional and spiritual support through life's journey.

### Thank you, donors!

With your support, Housecall Providers had a great 2014. Gifts from more than 400 donors totaled nearly \$260,000 and helped to ensure that all patients received the care they needed regardless of their ability to pay for services.

**Writing, editing and design:** Dan Cook, Kathy Fors, Kathleen Krushas. [Tothepointpublications.com](http://Tothepointpublications.com).

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