



The Power of House Calls in Treating Alzheimer's Patients

Caring for an aging loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia while juggling family and work responsibilities can be an overwhelming and daunting task. House calls can provide relief for caregivers as well as comfort and safety for patients.

VNA Health Group's Visiting Physician Services (VPS) provides a safe and effective way of delivering medical care to those that are most frail and vulnerable. For those living with Alzheimer's disease, the services offered are essential to providing critical care with minimal agitation, while simultaneously giving patients the dignity they deserve.



House calls provide relief for both the patient and caregiver, as the stress of traveling for appointments is eliminated.



VPS house call physician, Deborah Bessen, MD, examines a patient during a routine exam.

Dr. Deborah Bessen is among the eight physicians on staff with VPS and joins a growing number of doctors reviving the old-fashioned custom of house calls. She noted that there is an increased number of elderly patients requesting house calls due to mobility issues, chronic conditions and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"When you take somebody with Alzheimer's disease or any form of dementia out of their home, it puts them in unfamiliar surroundings, which is a disadvantage," Dr. Bessen explained. "With house calls, you can see what's going on in the home, so we get to see what all the challenges are."

Physicians are able to allocate as much time as they need for patients to be comfortable. You give them as much dignity, she explained, and as much respect as you can.

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

There is also the opportunity to assess caregivers to ensure that they are not experiencing burnout, as caregivers will often sacrifice their own health and well-being. Caregivers frequently feel survivor's guilt when caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. "I always try to say you need to take care of yourself in order to keep taking care of your loved one," Dr. Bessen said.

For Dr. Bessen, one of the most rewarding parts of working in the home is forming strong bonds of trust with patients and their families.

If I walk out and somebody feels just a little better, I think that's probably the satisfaction of the job.

DEBORAH BESSEN, MD
Visiting Physician Services

Visiting Physician Services

Providing care in eight NJ counties:
**Bergen | Middlesex | Passaic | Somerset
Essex | Monmouth | Union | Ocean**

Call: **732-571-1000**
Email: info@visiting-physician.com
Website: www.vnahg.org/vps

Accept Medicare, Horizon & Amerigroup

Visiting Physician Services Provides In-Home Medical Care

VNA Health Group's Visiting Physician Services (VPS) division is a home-based primary care practice that makes house calls to older adults and homebound patients. Founded over 25 years ago, VPS' mission is to enable patients to stay at home as they age and to improve their quality of life.

"One of the biggest health care trends, as it applies to VPS, is the aging patient. People are living longer and living with chronic illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia, and we're starting to see an aging and sicker population who cannot get to the doctor's office," said Alex Binder, vice president, Visiting Physician Services. "Transporting them to the doctor and waiting around provides more risk to their health. House calls offer a safe alternative to traditional hospital-based medicine."

"This kind of medical practice isn't for every doctor. It takes a special kind of provider to do such personal work," Binder said. "For many of these patients, our clinicians become their family. We think this is the future of health care."

By taking a comprehensive and therapeutic approach that ensures patients stay as healthy as possible, patients can stay out of the hospital and emergency room. With VPS as the primary care physician, Alzheimer's patients can have peace of mind knowing quality medical care is only phone call away.

Visiting Physician Services allows Alzheimer's patients and their families to receive safe and effective care at home.



Fast Facts about Visiting Physician Services (VPS)

- 1 VPS is part of the Visiting Nurse Association Health Group, based in Holmdel, N.J.
- 2 VPS has been making house calls to older adults and homebound patients for over 25 years and is one of the largest house call practices in New Jersey.
- 3 Our mission is to enable patients to stay at home as they age with an improved quality of life.
- 4 The clinical staff is comprised of eight physicians and 28 nurse practitioners/physician assistants, a registered nurse and a licensed clinical social worker.
- 5 VPS covers Bergen, Passaic, Union, Essex, Middlesex, eastern Somerset, Monmouth and Ocean counties.
- 6 Comprehensive care includes physical exams, managing chronic conditions, medication management, palliative care, wound care, in-home diagnostic tests (X-rays, EKGs, bloodwork,) advanced care planning, telehealth, etc.
- 7 VPS makes house calls to private residences, senior housing buildings, retirement communities and assisted livings.
- 8 VPS can arrange for other in-home services such as visiting nurse services, physical and occupational therapy, visiting podiatrists, dentists, audiologists, optometrists, behavioral health, durable medical equipment, physical therapy and hospice care.
- 9 VPS becomes the patient's primary care doctor and sees them on a regular basis.
- 10 Accept Medicare, Horizon & Amerigroup