

Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital **House Calls**

Health care is out of the question for hundreds of local men and women who can afford nothing but a few groceries and the rent on one small room. Some don't even have the strength to seek help. Instead, they wait until the fear of imminent death forces them to seek expensive emergency care. The cycle repeats itself year after year, driving up society's costs and making life for the disenfranchised almost unbearably painful, frightening, and grim.

Since September 1996, Memorial Hospital has been breaking the cycle of neglect in Southwest Santa Rosa through a program called House Calls, in which a full-time Physician Assistant (PA), Registered Nurse (RN), and Chaplain go directly to the homes of people too frail, too disabled, too chronically ill, and too poor to seek help on their own. The names of potential patients come from community service groups, trailer park managers, church leaders, physicians, and Memorial's own emergency department, home health workers, and community organizers. The program covers comprehensive health evaluations, diagnosis, treatment, lab tests, exam equipment, and some medicines. A staff physician provides medical backup, and the team actively recruits other physicians and organizations for free care.

The results have been remarkable. Thanks to House Calls, one woman received surgery for cataracts so severe they made her world look like "a white tortilla;" today, she can see again, and tomorrow she plans to find herself a job. Another woman, homeless with eight children, received treatment for bronchitis before it turned into pneumonia.

Most of the stories are more complex. One elderly woman, half blind and crippled by a stroke, suffering from anemia and paralyzed by anxiety, needed help getting into a nursing home. Another needed care for hypertension, tuberculosis, osteoarthritis, and weak muscles from a broken ankle. A family needed help when an accident left the breadwinner paralyzed and brain damaged. One man with Alzheimer's disease needed a home safety assessment, spiritual support, and respite care for his exhausted wife. Another needed dietary education for diabetes, a flu shot, and an apartment with no stairs.

The House Calls team has hundreds of stories like these, with more added every week. After six months the team was making 130 home visits a month, with the number climbing by 30 percent a month!

A one-year seed grant with a 12-month extension from the Saint Joseph Health System has covered startup costs for the first two years. Now only private gifts can sustain House Calls for those who need it. Your gift for this extraordinary program will provide direct assistance to the most vulnerable members of our local community.

- To sponsor House Calls for one year..... \$160,000
- To endow House Calls..... \$3,200,000

Care Management. In most families when someone is sick or frail, the job of finding help, arranging appointments, handling paperwork and solving problems falls to a competent spouse or grown child. For the patients served by House Calls, there is no such family member; instead, the time-consuming job of care management falls to the House Calls staff. We invite you to help bring professional care management to the program team. This will free up the rest of the team to make nearly twice as many appointments with patients. And, it will ensure that every inquiry at the House Calls office receives immediate attention. Sometimes the greatest gift of all is the gift of time, energy, and the ability to make things happen. When a phone call to PG&E can keep an old man from shivering in the night, or when arrangements for home-delivered meals can save an elderly woman from starving to death, your contribution for case management will have made all the difference.

- To provide care management for House Calls clients for one year \$40,000