

Home care offers independent living with personalized care

Ask Perham resident Barb Bieger what she thinks about the home care services she receives and you will quickly learn it is about far more than the quality of the care she receives or the independence she's been able to retain. For her, it's also about trust, friendship, and family.

Bieger is currently receiving nursing, physical therapy, and occupational therapy services through Perham Living Home Care. The 79-year-old had gradually developed a problem with arthritis, which progressed to the point where her mobility was severely limited. Even with regular physical therapy appointments, Bieger had trouble playing golf and experienced pain when participating in many of the activities she enjoys.

It was decided that the best course of action would be two hip replacement surgeries. Her first hip replacement was this past May. After that surgery she received home care services for a couple of months. Bieger is once again utilizing home care services after her second surgery that was held on September 5.

Jen Flatau, RN, is Bieger's primary case manager. Flatau coordinates Bieger's care with the assistance of a team of nurses. "She is wonderful," Bieger says of her experience working with Jen. "She could be my daughter. I already have one daughter, but I would be happy to have two! The other nurses who have come to our house have all been wonderful as well."

A typical home care visit with Flatau begins with a routine head-to-toe assessment with complete vital signs. "I also provide education to patients and family members about the injury or illness, focusing on signs and symptoms to watch for and report. We go over information related to a patient's medications and health promotion," Flatau explains.

In addition to the nursing care Bieger receives twice a week, she is also scheduled for physical and occupational therapy appointments where the therapists come to her home and work with her in that setting. Flatau, an occupational therapist, physical therapist, medical social worker, two other nurses, and management staff hold a monthly meeting to focus specifically on coordinating Bieger's care.

"Of course, I have to do the exercises they've

given me every day though," Bieger says, adding with a laugh, "even when they're not here."

Her independent living lifestyle is all possible because of the home care services she receives and the assistance she gets from her husband, Paul. After Bieger's most recent surgery, she says she contemplated moving into Perham Living's Transitions, it's short-stay rehabilitation unit. "My husband so wanted to have me come home though,"



Paul and Barb Bieger enjoy a peaceful afternoon together in their backyard. The nursing, physical therapy, and occupational therapy services Barb receives through Perham Living Home Care allow her to maintain her independent lifestyle in the comfort of her own home.

she explains. "Although Transitions was an option for me, it just wasn't right for my family."

"It really is great that we are fortunate enough to have these home care services available to so many people in our small community," Flatau adds. "At each visit, we make sure to involve any family member or caregiver who a client wishes to have present. We encourage family members to be involved in asking questions and try to provide them with similar education to what we provide patients with."

"There's no doubt that having somebody here who is a professional gives you confidence," says Paul Bieger. Since his wife's surgery, he has taken on most of the cooking and cleaning duties around the house, along with helping her do the things she's not yet flexible enough to do like putting on socks and shoes.

Flatau has spent time during the home care visits instructing Paul about the best way to give shots and asking if he has any questions about his wife's recovery process. "It has been very easy to have home health care here," he adds. "They're all very professional and great at what they do. I would highly recommend them all."

"It really is an extension of family," Barb



Paul Bieger receives advice from Flatau about the proper way to administer a shot. Keeping family members educated about best care practices is a priority for Perham Living Home Care.

Bieger adds. "They're all very caring and helpful. The education and help I've received through home health care has given me the confidence I needed to progress and move ahead. Without these services, I would feel a lot less confident and I would be more anxious I'm sure. I now know what exercises

to do and how to manage my pain. I would hate to go through this without home health care."

Flatau expresses similar sentiments when asked about the most rewarding part of her job, saying, "I like the relationships that are built. It requires a lot of trust on behalf of a client to allow people to come into his or her home. I appreciate that the work I do is not just about a one-time visit, it is about forming an ongoing relationship."

With the help of home care services, Bieger is already well on her way to meeting her personal recovery goals. In between her two surgeries she was able to get back to walking a mile a day. She hopes to soon be walking again at the Perham Area Community Center and hitting the golf course once the weather warms up.

Perham Living Home Care recently recognized 30 years in business. Thanks to this team of highly skilled health care professionals, patients are able to receive high-quality care in the comfort of their own home. Perham Living Home Care provides services in Otter Tail, Wadena, and Becker Counties.

In addition to physical, occupational, and speech therapy, Perham Living Home Care offers wound care, home infusion therapy, pediatric care, medication management, personal cares, social services, and disease management. All services are provided by registered nurses, therapists, social workers, and home health aides.



Jen Flatau, RN, takes time to thoroughly assess Barb Bieger's health and progress during each home care visit. Bieger says this personalized care gives her confidence that her recovery is moving forward properly.

OB Medical Home: A team effort to prenatal care

Pregnancy and childbirth can be some of the most rewarding, and challenging, experiences in a woman's life. At Perham Health, we are committed to making sure each expectant mom is provided with quality care and education to best serve both mom and baby.

Perham Health's new Medical Home OB program works to promote prenatal education as the most effective way for new parents to prepare for the childbirth experience and to gain information on the best care for a mother during her pregnancy journey. Prenatal education is offered to all obstetric (OB) patients. As a part of the program, one-on-one education is also offered to new moms during a one-hour visit with the hospital's OB health coach.

"The result is high-quality, well-coordinated care that fits your needs," explains program director Megan Hemmelgarn, RN. "Your OB Medical Home team listens to your questions and helps you find your way through the system. With OB Medical Home you become more involved in your own care."

An expectant mother's team would include

her primary care provider, an RN health coach, and other health care professionals. If desired, trusted family members and friends may also be included in the care team. A patient's cultural and religious beliefs are valued and respected throughout the care process.

Beginning around six to eight weeks gestation, expectant moms will meet with an RN OB health coach to discuss the pregnancy. This provides an excellent opportunity to ask questions and bring up any concerns. The RN health coach will be available to offer guidance throughout the pregnancy.

"Your primary care provider partners with you and your care team to help manage and organize care throughout your pregnancy and postpartum period, reducing stress for you and your family," Hemmelgarn continues. "We will also provide detailed education, assess for chronic disease and medication management, and formulate a plan to provide the safest and most educated pregnancy around."

Keeping patients informed and addressing health issues as they arise will help reduce the

need for emergency room visits and hospital stays. "The RN health coach will also suggest educational sessions that may be right for you and your family. Prenatal, childbirth, infant care, and car seat education classes are all offered through Perham Health," explains Hemmelgarn.

"This is such a great program for so many reasons," remarks Dr. Andrea Westby, family medicine. "The biggest benefit will be to our obstetric patients who can have a consistent contact person coordinating their care throughout the pregnancy and postpartum period – from making sure they get their tetanus booster, RhoGAM shots, ultrasounds, and labs done at the appropriate times to making sure they are receiving the necessary education and follow-up care. We are here to support them through one of the biggest transition times of their lives."

With the addition of the OB Medical Home Program, Perham Health is now able to provide even more personalized care to help families through pregnancy, birthing, and beginning life together as a family.

New providers join Perham Health team

Perham Health is excited to announce the recent addition of two new members to its outstanding team of healthcare providers.

Kevin Swenson evaluates and treats same day clinic and emergency department patients as a certified physician assistant. "I enjoy the opportunity to see a wide variety of patients and work in a facility where all the providers are friendly and helpful whenever I have questions. Everyone here has been excellent to work with and we all have the patients' best interests in mind," comments Swenson.

Swenson is thankful for the valuable experience he gained working as a full-time paramedic with Perham Memorial Hospital and Home and with MeritCare LifeFlight in Fargo. Swenson graduated from the Physician Assistant program at the University of North Dakota and was able to complete the majority of his clinical rotations at Perham Health.

"Two years later, I am humbled to be working alongside these incredible providers in a progressive community that has supported my efforts," he says.

In his free time, Swenson enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons. When he's not busy coaching sports or involved with his kids' activities, he can often be found at the golf course, on the lake, hunting, or spending time outside. He has been very active in the Perham community over the years, serving as past president of the PACC Board of Directors and the founding president of the Perham Area Youth Hockey Association. Swenson continues to serve as a roster paramedic at Perham Area EMS.

Also new to the Perham Health team is Mindy Anderson, a family nurse practitioner who is working in primary care. Anderson will be seeing patients of all ages for annual physicals, follow-up visits, and acute care concerns.

Anderson, who is originally from Mayville, North Dakota, attended nursing school at the University of Mary in Bismarck. She worked on a cardiac floor in Bismarck before earning her Doctorate of Nursing Practice at North Dakota State University.

"I strive to deliver holistic and compassionate



Kevin Swenson,
PA-C



Mindy Anderson,
FNP

care to patients. My goal is to provide care throughout the lifespan, helping people achieve health and wellness," she says.

Anderson is married to Pete Anderson, who works as a physical therapist at Perham Health. The couple has a 4-month-old daughter, Olivia. In her spare time, Anderson enjoys spending time with family, golfing, running, baking, quilting, and being out on the lake.

"My husband and I always knew we wanted to get back to a smaller community," Anderson says of her decision to practice in Perham. "I'm excited to be here to serve the community and work with people on achieving their highest level of health."



ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Just for Women

Tuesday, October 14 • 5-8 p.m.
Perham High School • 200 5th St SE

- Free Health Screenings - CBC, TSH, Glucose, Cholesterol, HDL, Blood Pressure*
- Medical Panel
- XaBeat Demonstration
- Chair Massage
- Educational Booths
- Light Meal
- Door Prizes and More!

**FREE
ADMISSION**

*Attendees will receive a voucher the night of the event for blood screenings.
The screenings will take place at Perham Health October 15, 17, 20, and 22, from 7 - 10:30 a.m.

For more information or to register, please call (218) 347-1640
or email information@perhamhealth.org.



Keynote speaker, Jody Urquhart. Award-winning humorous and inspirational speaker and author.