



This Newsletter is a publication of Sigma Health Care, Inc.

# Home Health

## What it takes to be # 1

First, and foremost, an agency must have ethical guidelines. This begins by making it a priority to hire and support those employees who believe in the ethical standards of the company. Standards must be set high to keep quality employees. It is through quality people that a quality performance is based on. Without quality control, outcome based performance will be at a minimum. Within a dynamic health care industry a home health agency must, absolutely, distinguish itself above the rest. How does it do this? It begins with leadership. Effective leaders are constantly seeking improvements in the field and educating their subordinates. One example is keeping up to date on the latest

technological advances that improves the provision of care for patients then investing in using this technology in every day practice. Another way a home health agency distinguishes itself is through contributing to and educating the medical community. It must be proactive, not passive. It must be in compliance with the rules and regulations set by government regulatory agencies and programs at all times and not by trying to work around those rules. If it is not, problems arise that could linger for years. Many home health agencies have changed names or have gone out of business for this very reason. An agency will be number

one if the community has confidence in its longevity, as well as confidence that quality improvement will be an ongoing facet of its operations. Consider the following:  
Are its ethical standards set high?  
Is the leadership fully devoted to education and improvement?  
Is it aware of the latest technological developments in homecare?  
Does it enhance the community through its involvement and contributions?  
Is it in compliance with rules and regulations set forth?  
Has its name changed, and if so, why?  
Is quality job one?  
The choice is yours.

Kathleen Scharchburg

## Cardio Readings at your finger tips...

In a revolutionary way to care for cardiac patients. Sigma, home health services introduces EKG at home to complement its Big@Heart cardiac disease management program. Using [sigmhomehealth.com](http://sigmhomehealth.com)

doctors and health care professionals can monitor a patient's heart within minutes of a nursing visit. This Cardiac solution is expected to revolutionize, both, preventive, primary and secondary cardiovascular rehabilitation for

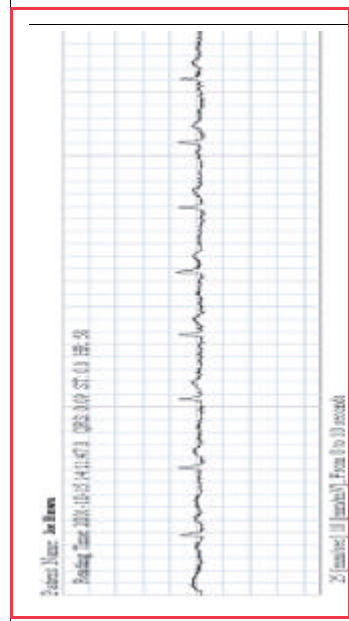
home care patients in this area. It is worth mentioning that Sigma has introduced both PT/INR point of care testing as well 24 hours total cardiac data monitoring for its cardiac Rehab and disease management program.

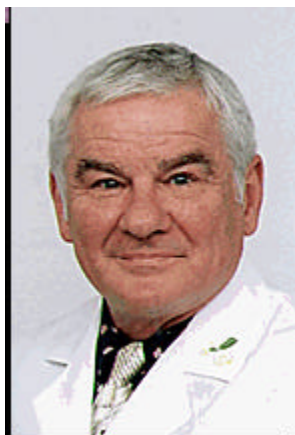
Volume 2, Issue 1

June 2002

### Inside this issue:

<i>What it takes to be #1</i>	1
<i>Cardio reading at your finger tips...</i>	1
<i>Sigma's board member</i>	2
<i>Raising the Bar On Home Health...</i>	2
<i>Going strong at 103</i>	3
<i>The Eye opener</i>	3
<i>Services</i>	4
<i>Sigma's volunteers</i>	4
<i>Promise yourself</i>	4





## *Sigma's Board member, Dr. John Heggers elected a Vice President for the American Burn Association*

Dr. John P. Heggers, a Senior Member of the Professional Advisory Committee for Sigma Health Care Inc, here in Galveston, was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the American Burn Association (ABA) at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL in April of this year. Dr. Heggers is a Professor of Surgery (Plastic) at the School of Medicine and Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at the Graduate School of Biological Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). Additionally he is the Director of Clinical

Microbiology at the Shriners Burns Hospital which is affiliated with UTMB. Dr. Heggers has been awarded many honors and has served in many leadership roles in both National and International Medical Associations. His contributions to the Field of Medicine began in 1951 as a Navy Corpsman during the Korean War, then in 1959 as a Commissioned Officer in the Medical Service of the U.S. Army, and continued after his retirement from the U.S. Army in 1977 in the academic arena amassing

over 40 years of scientific investigation in medical science. He has investigated the role of silicone in breast implant hypersensitivity. He has also championed the role of alternative medicine with his hallmark publications on the beneficial effects of *Aloe vera*, Propolis and Grapefruit Seed Extract in the treatment of burns. He has published over 200 articles, books and chapters and is recognized as a distinguished scientist in his own right. We at Sigma Health Care congratulate him for his achievements

## *Raising the Bar On Home Care Representation*

Trust and credibility are essential for a successful home health care representative, or community coordinator. Like pharmaceutical reps, home health reps need to share accurate information when informing the health care professional of the benefits of their services. They need to have an education level equal to or near that of their client, mainly due to the fact a professional can sense whether or not the rep is degreed in their respective field. Trust and credibility are qualities that create an atmosphere of understanding.

A community coordinator in the home care industry is inquisitive of their customers' needs. They ask what is most

important for a home care agency to focus on to meet those needs, and consistently considers ways to improve. The benefits of changes in technology and regulations create a need to show physicians and health care providers ways to effectively monitor the patients' health. This educational training and knowledge reflects the image of a home health agency that is created by its representative. Also, with a desire for continuing education and greater knowledge, improvement of the services provided to the patients will result in better outcomes. A focus on professionalism seeking to

understand the market, communicating unique values, and servicing the customer summarize how credibility and trust is developed in the health care representative. By seeking ways to improve, be it through advances in technology or educating providers, the home health rep's reputation will be built on respect. Thus, like the importance of pharmaceutical reps information to a doctor, those who are involved in the patients' care need facts on updated regulations and procedures in the home care industry.

*Kathleen Scharchburg*

*“educational training and knowledge reflects the image of a home health agency that is created by its representative”*



### *Home Health Information Booklet*

**What you need to know about Medicare benefits for home care patients.**

*Call for your free copy today*

**Galveston: 409-763-6800**

**Harris: 713-947-CARE**

**Others: 866-4-Home Health**

*Request it on the web: [www.sigmahomehealth.com](http://www.sigmahomehealth.com)*

## Going Strong at 103

Sadie\* is 103 years old. She lives with a family who board and care for several people of various ages who can't live alone. The family, Sadie, and her granddaughter (who lives nearby) rely on assistance from both publicly funded and privately funded home care services.

Sadie's hearing, vision, and mind are very sharp. She is frail but her health is good. She usually uses a wheelchair but she can still walk with a walker.

Sadie isn't able to get out much due to a fall when she was 97 years old, so

she was interviewed by her granddaughter, who brought Sadie's comments to one of our local community research site consultations.

Here's what Sadie says has kept her going strong:

Lots of fresh air, exercise, otherwise you go soft.

Leisure time is important.

Think about happy things, remember happy times – it cheers you up.

Forget about unhappy times and keep them out of your head.

Moderation in everything you do.

Receiving kindness is a great comfort in old age.

A diet that is heavy on fruit and vegetables and light on meat.

Family is very important to carry on your good name.

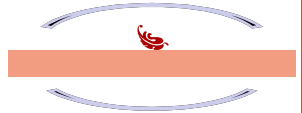
Belonging to someone, especially family is a comfort.

Not nice to stand alone.

Move forward or you stand alone – being around young people and maintaining knowledge of world affairs through news broadcasts.

*\*not her real name*

*Eye On Home Health ©  
is a publication of  
Sigma Health Care, Inc.*



*Corporate office  
1609 Tremont Street  
Galveston, Texas 77550*

*Tel: 409-763-6800*

*Fax: 409-763-2905*

*"What is moral is what  
you feel good after."*

*—Ernest Hemingway*

## The Opener

*Agnes\* who is wheelchair and homebound was ordered home care physical therapy by her doctor through home health services. When the nurse went to assess the patient's needs and admit her to care, Agnes and her daughter, refused the care. They stated that the patient couldn't afford the co-payment on these services as her medical bills are piling up. When the nurse tried to explain to them that Medicare covers home care services at 100%, the patient said that everyone says that at first then they start billing us. The nurse left without admitting and the doctor was informed of Agnes and her caregiver's decision. The doctor said*

*that he would try to explain this to*

*Agnes since she truly needs her home physical therapy.*

What had really happened with this lady?

It did not take long to find out that Agnes had actually received 10 visits of therapy in only 25 out of the 60 episodic days from another home health agency in which Medicare paid services at a full episode rate with no co-payment to the patient. Agnes required more physical therapy after those 25 days which could have been continued under the same home health plan of care and Medicare payment should have covered it but since the home health agency had a financial

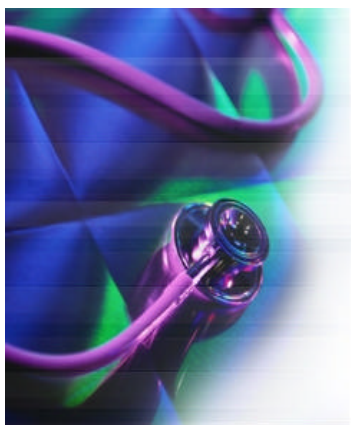
interest in an out patient therapy clinic, instead of continuing home health physical therapy, a new plan of care for out patient therapy was established through the out patient clinic, and since the same physical therapist continued to see the patient at her home, Agnes was clueless to the change until she got the bills from Medicare informing her of her responsibility of the 20% co payment.

Patients must understand and be educated to their rights, which the law protects. Physicians have the responsibility of insuring that their patients are receiving the services they specifically ordered and through whom, and also insuring that plans of

care adequately meet patients' needs. And always give patients the choice of where to go for care. Because after all care is about patients not providers. Most providers adhere dearly to rules, regulations and ethical standards, but only those few who think they can walk between the drops of rain and not getting wet are like the bad apple that spoils the rest of the basket.

*\*not her real name*





## *Home Health Services*

### Skilled Nursing

*Post Surgery  
Cardiac care  
Geriatric Care  
Medication Teaching  
Diabetic Care  
Renal care  
Respiratory care  
Laboratory Services  
Nutrition  
Any other care that cannot be performed safely by a non medical person*

### Rehabilitation Therapy

*Physical Therapy  
Occupational Therapy  
Speech Therapy*

### Home Infusion

*Total Parental Nutrition  
Enteral Nutrition  
Anti-infective Therapy  
Biologicals  
Blood product*

**Sigma Health Care, Inc**

**409-763-6800**

**713-947-CARE**

[www.SigmaHomeHealth.com](http://www.SigmaHomeHealth.com)



## **Sigma's Volunteers**



## **Be a senior Volunteer**

**Whether you make a visit to a patient, helping a patients going to a store or a clinic, play cards or even just make a phone call once a week will give a patient who lives alone a reason for life and hope of the future. It will expedite healing and reduce anxiety.**

**Be the hope and the healing for a seniors. Be a hero.**

**Call today and enjoy your kindness.**  
*for more information on this program call  
409-763-6800*

## *Promise yourself*

Promise yourself to be strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.