

# INCORPORATING HOME VISITS IN A PRIMARY CARE RESIDENCY CLINIC: THE PATIENT AND PHYSICIAN EXPERIENCE

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## PROBLEM

Home visits, a once popular form of health care delivery have become less common. Few studies have focused on home visits and what value the experience may have to the resident physician and their patients.

## BACKGROUND

- With the increasing cost of health care, alternative models have been proposed to control rising costs and readmission rates.
- With an aging population with poor access to care there is a need to revive home visits.
- It has been documented that home visits may<sup>1-5</sup>:
  - Provide high quality of care
  - Encourage team based communication
  - Improve health outcomes
  - Reach frail populations
  - Eliminate patient travel burden
  - Empower physicians to create their own care models
  - Improve physician coordination with community agencies
  - Improve understanding of patient's social determinants of health
  - Provide patient emotional support
- Residents have little to no exposure to house calls in medical school and residency.
- Incorporating training into residency programs may give residents the confidence, training, and hopefully inspiration, to incorporate house calls into their future practices.<sup>5</sup>

## OBJECTIVE

1. To familiarize the resident physicians to the home visit experience
2. To assess desire and confidence to conduct home visits upon graduation from the program
3. To capture the voice of patients & residents participating in home visits

## METHODS

- A six month pilot was conducted at St. Luke's Family Practice Center (SLFPC).
- The residents and patients were asked to complete a post-survey following their home visit experience.
- A total of 30 home visits were then conducted within an average of three mile radius from the clinic.

### HOME VISIT CODES – ESTABLISHED PATIENT:

99347	Self-limited or minor problem, 15 min.
99348	Low to moderate problem, 25 min.
99349	Moderate to high problem, 40 min.
99350	Patient unstable or significant new problem requiring immediate physician attention, 60 min.

### HOME VISIT VS. CLINIC CHARGES:

Level 4 office visit (99214) charge	\$374
Level 3 home visit (99349) charge	\$341

## RESULTS

- Resident providers (n=10) and their patients who completed surveys (n=11) believe home visits improved their quality of care.
- Overall, **80% of resident physicians** and **100% of patients** were very interested in participating in home visits in the future.



**“I can't leave my home so I love that they are able to come to me.”**



**“I used to lie a lot before the home visits.”**



**“In winter, I prefer [my doctor] to come here. It's a lot harder for me to come in [to the clinic visit].”**

- Based on survey responses, the top reasons residents regarded home visits as important included:
  - Improved patient care
  - Strengthened relationships with patients
  - Increase job satisfaction
  - Improved understanding of environmental and social factors, allowing for further insights into patient barriers to care.
  - Every patient in the survey said that the visits resulted in increased trust of their doctor.



**“They showed they care.”**



## CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, we believe home visits may be a significant part of the future direction of health care. Based on survey responses, our hope is to better meet patients' needs by making home visits an integral part in physician training and primary care models.

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**“I was able to show how my environment affects my life.”**

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