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# Archives

## House Calls Are No Longer a Thing of the Past

Thursday, May 08, 2003

**Remember when doctors made house calls? Well, for some seniors living in Fort Worth, Texas, those days are here again. Thanks to a new program called "House Calls," doctors and nurse practitioners are visiting many of the 104 residents at Vega Place, a HUD-subsidized apartment community for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Because of "House Calls," primary medical services are now offered in the convenience of a patient's home.**



"House Calls" supporters are excited about the new program. Pictured sitting from left to right are: Vega Place seniors Lili Jones and Evelyn Rush. In back and standing from left to right are Marcey Gage of Health Essentials Solutions; Dr. Ray Lewis; Ja'net Huling; E. Ross Burton; Sarah Topham, Vega Place On-site Manager; Vergie Anderson; and Vernon Butler, Jr.

Ray Lewis, M.D., a Fort Worth geriatric specialist who oversees "House Calls," told the gathering that preventive medicine is always better and less expensive. "If we can keep people out of nursing homes and hospitals, it can have a positive effect on the entire health system," Lewis added.

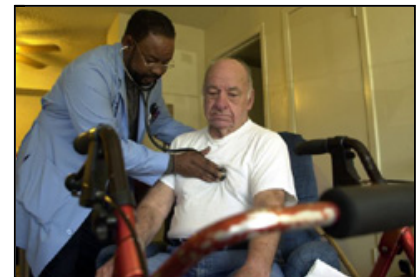
Other Fort Worth HUD staff taking part in the kick-off event were Multifamily Project Managers Vergie Anderson and Eva Aromi, and Vernon Butler, Jr., Multifamily Neighborhood Networks Program Officer.

Ja'net Huling, the previous property manager at Vega Place, some time ago began considering better ways to meet the medical needs of seniors and disabled residents who were unable to visit their doctors regularly. From her work she knew many seniors do not always get the care they need. She also knew that some have trouble traveling or getting rides, and most do not like long waits at the county hospital or seeing a different doctor every time.

After being awarded a three-year HUD Service Coordination Grant totaling \$176,000, Huling formed a partnership with a local health care provider - Health Essentials Solutions, Inc. - to develop the "House Calls" program and make it available to Vega Place residents.

Huling recently held a kick-off ceremony that included senior residents, friends, local health care providers and other community leaders.

HUD's E. Ross Burton, regional director of the Multifamily Housing Hub, said the underlying goal of the service coordination initiative is to enable senior residents obtain needed services, such as health care, help them avoid unnecessary or premature institutionalization and improve the quality of their lives.



Dr. Ray Lewis listens to the heartbeat of Ed Oliver, who is among the 90 percent of Vega Place residents who qualify for the "House Calls" program.

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20410  
Telephone: (202) 708-1112 TTY: (202) 708-1455

