

Nurse sets up business to provide in-home health care

BRISTOL — It took Jennifer Harvey, co-owner and clinical director of Live Free Home Health Care, only a year of working for another home health care agency to realize how much she enjoys the work and how great the need is for such services is in central New Hampshire.

“I like that fact that we’re able to keep people living at home,” Harvey said. “People thrive more, heal quicker, live longer and just have a better quality of life.”

Harvey, who co-owns the business with her husband, Jason, who is the business and financial manager, said they opened their doors almost five years ago.

The Bristol-based business provides home care services to people living in central New Hampshire, from the Concord area to the Plymouth Area, including Campton. The largest number of clients live in Laconia, Gilford and Belmont.

Harvey, a registered nurse, said they decided to open their business after she worked for another home health care agency.

She added that when she worked for the other agency, they sometimes had to turn potential clients away because there weren’t enough workers to help.

“We really saw a need,” Harvey said. “It’s a fairly rural part of state.”

She said she has been a nurse for 12 years and has also had hospital and physician practice experience.

However, it only took Harvey a year working as a home health care provider that she realized she had found her calling or niche.

“We provide services that allow people to remain in their homes and living independently for as long as possible,” Harvey said about why she loves the field of home health care.

She said after talking over the idea with her husband, who has a background in banking and finance, they began looking into what it would take, from both a business and a state regulation perspective to start their own home health care company.

She said within six months of starting the process, they started seeing clients.

Currently, the company employs 45 people, including between 10 to 15 who work full-time hours. The rest working part-time or per diem.

The services they provide range from non-medical services — such as assistance with personal care and hygiene, exercise, meals, transportation, organization and companionship — to licensed nursing assistant and skilled nursing services.

Licensed nursing assistants can help with personal care, medication reminders, physical transfers, use of home medical equipment and assistance with range of motion and strength training exercises.

Skilled nurses can provide I.V. therapy, help with diabetes management, blood draws, wound care, medication management, nutritional counseling and coordination with primary care providers.

The organization also provides temporary, respite services for regular caregivers of seniors, including those with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia.



VICTORIA GUAY/STAFF PHOTO

JENNIFER HARVEY, owner and clinical director of Live Free Home Health Care in Bristol, left, looks over a client schedule on the computer screen with Stacey Pauquette, LNA supervisor. The business allows seniors to remain living in their homes longer.

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The business accepts private paying, Medicaid and respite care grant clients.

The needs and level of care each client requires vary widely from a few hours a week to an hour a day or longer.

She said their services and the services of similar agencies, even when it’s a just few hours a week, can mean the difference between independence and moving into a long-term care facility.

An example of how home health care services can help a senior continue living at home, Harvey said, would be if a senior needed daily help bathing, taking medications and preparing meals for the day, and there was no family member who could do that.

“It gives people a great alternative,” Harvey said. “Years ago, seniors who needed some assistance had two choices, either a family member moved in or they went to a nursing home. Now there are so many options.”