



Touchmark Home Services receives award



Message from
Scott Neil, MSW
—Administrator

I am proud to announce that the nonprofit organization Acumentra Health honored four Oregon home health groups, including Touchmark Home Services, with the 2008 Quality Leader award.

The Quality Leader awards are presented to home health care agencies that have had either the highest rate of improvement in management of oral medications or the lowest rate of acute care hospitalizations. These figures are based on performance for a 12-month period ending in September 2007.

I want to thank all members of the Touchmark team. Because of your exceptional service, Touchmark received this statewide recognition.

Bringing balance to life

One in three Americans 65 and older falls each year, and 30 percent of them require medical treatment. Earlier this year, a coalition of senior advocates requested \$20.7 million in

funding for the Centers for Disease Control to help address the problem.

Touchmark Home Services works in conjunction with Touchmark Rehabilitation & Balance Center. Director Jennifer Troth, MPT, provides oversight to the center's services, which include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy.

As the need for more fall reduction services has increased nationally, we have teamed up to bring clients additional offerings that can assist in reducing the risk of falls.



Betty Tangney (left) has her balance assessed on the Balance Master®. Touchmark Rehabilitation & Balance Center Director Jennifer Troth, MPT, helps perform the assessment.

Specifically, the Rehabilitation & Balance Center uses the Balance Master® as part of treatment. This specialized equipment evaluates balance and provides information for treatment regimens.

Call today to learn more about the Balance Master and other services available through Touchmark. We look forward to serving you!

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Editor's note: The following article showcases Touchmark Home Health & Home Care, which is located in Meridian, Idaho, and is a sister affiliate to Touchmark Home Services. Both groups offer similar services.

Right there when—and where—you need help

“I cannot say enough good things about Touchmark Home Health!” —Rosemary Hill

On February 14, 2007, Rosemary Hill and her husband, Jay, were released from the hospital. Rosemary recalls that the sweetest part of that Valentine's Day was arriving home and having Touchmark Home Health & Home Care already set up and ready to care for them.

Weeks earlier, Rosemary and Jay were returning from a trip to Nevada when the hairline fracture in Rosemary's right femur suddenly became painful. “I have osteoporosis,” says Rosemary, “and I remember thinking that my leg had finally broken.” Consequently, the couple quickly returned home.

Rosemary's doctor gave her the option of letting the femur heal itself or having surgery to stabilize the bone. Having no guarantee of how long it might take to heal itself, she chose surgery. Since Jay already was scheduled to have prostate surgery after their Nevada trip, Rosemary scheduled her operation near the same time. She also arranged to have them both released to their home on the same day.

While their parents were still in the hospital, the Hill's children contacted Touchmark Home Health & Home Care, which assembled a dedicated team that included a registered nurse, physical therapist, and home health and home care aides. The team coordinated with the hospital and doctors for a seamless transition home.

Rosemary especially appreciates the flexibility of Touchmark's Home Health & Home Care services.

At first, she and Jay needed a lot of help, because Rosemary couldn't put any weight on her foot for four months. They both had regular visits from a Touchmark Home Health registered nurse and physical therapist. Touchmark Home Care aides also came morning and evening to help with personal care. As Rosemary became more mobile and able to care for her and Jay, they reduced both services.

At the time of this article, Jay is still using the services of a Touchmark physical therapist, registered nurse, and Home Health aide, but much less than before.

Myrna, their Home Care aide, now comes one hour in the morning, five days a week. She makes the bed, bathes Jay, shaves and dresses him, helps with his medications, and helps him with stretching and strengthening exercises.

“You should see all she does in that one hour,” Rosemary says. “Myrna is amazing! She's fast, so good, and we are very fond of her. She's like one of the family.”

Rosemary chuckles. “Jay absolutely loves Myrna. He responds to exercise much better with her than with me.”

Michelle, their physical therapist, helped both of them when they first came home from the hospital. Now, Michelle works with Jay on his walking and balance, which helps with his Parkinson's disease.

“Michelle is wonderful,” says Rosemary. “She's very thorough. And when she exercises Jay, she's very fussy about doing everything right, which I like.”

Sean is the nurse who monitors Jay and takes care of any special medical issues that come up. “I can't say enough good things about Sean,” Rosemary says. “I tell you, he's just an amazing guy. He goes that extra mile and just makes you feel like he really cares about you. He's so sincere. A very good nurse, very thorough.”

Rosemary even offers kudos for the Touchmark Home Health & Home Care **administrative staff**:

“Everyone in the office is terrific, too—just so helpful! Dealing with insurance is such a headache, but they got right on it and helped me sort out all the paperwork so I could get reimbursed.”

“Everybody we have had from Touchmark has been terrific ... so conscientious ... so helpful,” Rosemary says. “I just cannot say enough good things about them!”

You can strengthen your bones



by **Winona Phelps, RN**
—Touchmark Nurse Consultant

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. In fact, it is often called a “silent disease,” because bone loss occurs without symptoms.

People may not know that they have osteoporosis until their bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump, or fall causes a vertebra to collapse or a bone to break. These broken bones, also known as fractures, occur typically in the hip, spine, and wrist. According to the National Osteoporosis Society, osteoporosis is responsible for more than 300,000 hip fractures each year, and a hip fracture almost always requires hospitalization and major surgery.

Eighty percent of those affected by osteoporosis are women. Specialized tests called bone mineral density (BMD) tests can measure bone density in various sites of the body. A BMD test can detect osteoporosis before a fracture occurs, predict chances of fracturing in the future, and determine the rate of bone loss and/or monitor the effects of treatment if a BMD test is conducted at intervals of one year or more. Medicare reimburses for BMD testing every two years.

The following five steps can optimize bone health and help prevent osteoporosis:

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D (and as much as possible avoid refined white sugar and flour, high-fructose corn syrup, soft drinks, and highly acidic foods);
- Participate regularly in weight-bearing and

resistance-training exercise, such as walking;

- Follow a healthy lifestyle with no smoking and only moderate, if any, alcohol intake;
- Talk to your health care professional about bone health and bone density testing;
- Use medication when appropriate.

Too often, people believe that osteoporosis is an inevitable part of aging, and once you have it, there’s nothing that can be done about it. Neither is true. You can affect your bone health. Talk to your health care professional today about osteoporosis.