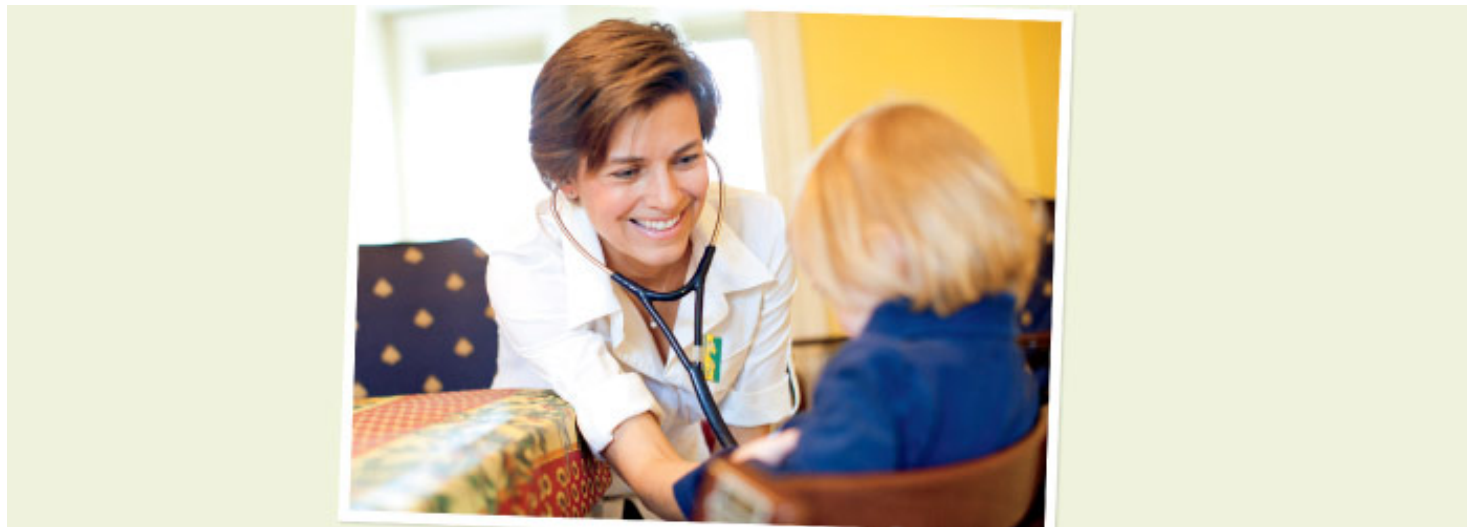


Class Notes Profiles



Making house calls

By Nicole Sweeney Etter

When the phone rings, Heidi Johnson, Nurs '91, grabs her medical bag and dashes off to meet her next pint-sized patient. From her home base on Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Hill, Johnson tends to the ear infections, hacking coughs, mystery rashes and other ailments of neighborhood children. Her patients' parents include government workers, lawyers, teachers, stay-at-home moms, fellow Marquette grads, and even U.S. Senators and Congresswomen. The latter "are just like any other mom with a sick child," she says.

She started her practice in 2009, after posting a single message on a listserv for neighborhood parents. Word spread as quickly as pink eye in a day care center. "I think I launched at the perfect time," says the mother of three. "I started in November, going into cold and flu season, and then H1N1 hit, and nobody wanted to go into a doctor's office." The house-call approach is also a hit with clients who would rather not fight downtown D.C.'s traffic and parking.

She typically makes 15 to 20 house calls a week, but she saw 130 kids in January. Many find her through her website, heidijohnsoncnpn.com. After being featured on the cover of *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* last year, she started getting calls from health care providers around the nation who wanted tips on starting their own house-call businesses.

Despite the demand for Johnson's services, she limits her business to urgent care and isn't interested in being a primary provider. She has had to send a few cases to the ER, but most problems are easily resolved. "Kids bounce back really quickly," she says.