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HOUSE CALL SERVICE BRINGS NEW LEVEL OF KIDDIE CARE TO HILL

When I called Heidi Johnson, she was with a patient, but she wasn't in an office or an exam room—she was at the Capitol Hill home of a child with possible strep throat. Accompanying her was her well-stocked, oversized black bag.

Johnson a certified pediatric nurse practitioner (CPNP), comes to you. That is to say, to your child. That's right, she makes house calls. Yes, you can now soothe your baby, shrieking to high heaven with an ear infection, by telling her relief is on the way. If the kids have sore throats, your teen says she is too sick to go to school, or the twins both have a funny rash on their back, there's a ready solution at hand. If your active tot is bleeding from a fresh wound after yet another encounter with the coffee table, or worse, his elbow has



Heidi Johnson, CPNP, photo courtesy of House Calls on the Hill

popped out of its socket, or instead is vomiting and miserable, you now don't need to trek all the way to urgent care miles away, or wait for the next available doctor appointment. Instead, you can have a nurse come to you. One that can write prescriptions, diagnosis pneumonia and treat with antibiotics, administer rapid strep tests, even take oxygen levels. Johnson can also weigh your newborn, do simple laceration repair, help with asthma and administer nebulizers and allergy shots, and yes, do anything from pop in a dislocated elbow to help remove a wart.

Johnson, a mom of three, including three year-old twins, started **House Calls on the Hill** about seven weeks ago after leaving her post at Pullman & Ariza Pediatrics, a popular DC pediatrician's

office. Like many working moms, she needed a more accommodating schedule for herself and her family, one that didn't leave her exhausted.

She can see patients from newborn to age 22 in their homes, age 22 being the limit of her pediatric license.

Johnson, who worked at a now-closed pediatric center on the Hill until 2000, was already well-connected and knew many parents through school (she's an active Brent parent), work, the Moms on the Hill listserv and the neighborhood. And contacts from these places always told her she should begin a house call business. A nurse practitioner since 1994, Johnson already saw many small patients at home through the pediatrician's practice. So, when she realized that she was constantly exhausted after she went work to in September, rushing home to pick up her kids from school and then remaining "on" until bedtime, she left Pullman & Ariza and embarked on her own. She started seeing patients right around Thanksgiving.

And many Hill families (who happen to have kids who come come down from pink eye one month and bronchitis the next), are very happy for that.

She says she is seeing a lot of clients during the week. Weekends are hit or miss. She tells of one mom with three sick young kids. Johnson made the house call and was able to call in a prescription to local **Grubbs Pharmacy**. Grubbs delivered it. The mother did not have to bring one child, let alone three, out into the cold, wet weather, Johnson noted.

"You don't have to leave the Hill for prescriptions and sometimes you do not have to leave your house," Johnson said. She restricts her practice to Capitol Hill, and can call on her husband or extended family members who live close by to help with her own three kids if calls come at unpredictable times.

All client records and visits are kept confidential. She said she does not seek to replace a doctor and does not do well child visits.

“We also saw Heidi this past week, “stated Julia Noonan on MOTH (and who permitted the post to be used here). “We called her at 6 p.m. for a ‘my ear hurts Mommy’ and a 101.3 temp. Heidi arrived an hour later. What a fabulous experience – no long trek to the peds or minute clinic and no waiting in a room with other sick kids. The best compliment came from our 3 1/2 year-old, who asked Heidi if she wanted to stay and play with her,” Noonan wrote.

Johnson charges a base rate of \$60 per visit, which is based on the copay of going to an ER, which is usually \$50 to \$100.

Extras, such as strep tests and allergy shots, are priced a la carte and range from \$5 to \$25.

Although she does not take insurance, Johnson keeps copies of all her information, and gives copies for the client to submit to his or her insurance company.

What profile on house calls would be complete without going through the black bag, at least in print? Inside are “a stethoscope, my otoscope, ophthalmoscope, Pulsox, rapid strep tests, prescription pads, business pads and encounter forms,” she informed us, noting she logs every visit.

So, kids, if you can’t stay healthy all winter (and who can?)–at least you can stay indoors and get well.

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 By [Elizabeth Festa](#)  3 Comments 

Views

3 responses to “House Call Service Brings New Level of Kiddie Care to Hill”



Kate says:

[December 22, 2009 at 2:21 pm](#)

Heidi is fantastic! In the seven weeks she has been in business, she has been to see my twins three times. I am so grateful that she was able to come at odd hours (first thing in the morning, right before bedtime) and save me a trip across town and a tedious wait in the pediatrician's waiting room. Friends from other neighborhoods are jealous when I mention that I was able to get pink eye and ear infections taken care of in 10 minutes flat from my living room. This is really an unbelievable service and I hope that Heidi's business thrives for a long time to come.



Jane Wineinger says:

[January 15, 2010 at 12:37 am](#)

Heidi, I am so proud of you AND your entrepreneurial spirit! Shades of Uncle Duck!
Signed your mother's cousin, Jane



Vince Morris says:

[July 1, 2010 at 9:07 am](#)

Heidi is perfect. She has been to our house 3 times already and our 3 kids already are familiar with her. She came this morning before work. How cool is that?
We can't recommend her strongly enough.