 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

WHITEGLOVE HOUSE CALL HEALTH

Two more insurers to offer WhiteGlove House Call service to customers

By Lori Hawkins
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF
Wednesday, July 29, 2009

WhiteGlove House Call Health Inc. has signed agreements to offer its services to Aetna and UnitedHealthcare insurance customers in Texas, giving them an alternative to a trip to the doctor's office or a walk-in clinic for routine medical care.

Founded two years ago by Austin software entrepreneur Bob Fabbio and Dr. Bill Rice, WhiteGlove lets clients and their families schedule visits at home or work by medical professionals, who diagnose and treat minor illnesses such as the flu between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week.

"The idea is to bring the care to the patient, whether you're a mom at home with a sick kid, a professional who's stuck at the office or an elderly person who can't leave the house," Fabbio said.

Aetna official Carl King said WhiteGlove offers convenience and cost savings for members, while also saving the insurance company money by reducing the number of visits to emergency rooms and urgent care centers.

"We're always looking for innovative services, especially for care after traditional office hours," said King, president of health care delivery for Aetna's Southwest region. "Emergency room costs have skyrocketed in the last three years, and (WhiteGlove is) also cost-effective compared with urgent care centers. Seventy percent of WhiteGlove's services are delivered after office hours are closed."

King said WhiteGlove's approach fits into the bigger health care debate. Demand will increase for primary care services and alternative services that are more accessible and affordable, he said.

"I think we'll see a host of emerging alternatives, including e-visits (consultations over the Internet), primary care by telephone and physicians that come to the house. Any service that provides good quality and superior access as well as reduces costs will be attractive in a health care reform environment," King said. "It's clear we need to give people more choices to fit their lifestyles and their budget."

WhiteGlove visits are handled by licensed nurse practitioners or physicians, usually within two hours of a

call. In addition to providing treatment for ailments such as colds and skin rashes, and suturing minor cuts, the company delivers over-the-counter and prescription medications, handles insurance claims and provides wellness visits, such as checkups for cholesterol or blood pressure.

Fees vary, but most Aetna and UnitedHealthcare members will pay the cost of a specialist co-payment, about \$35, per visit.

Aetna will offer WhiteGlove services to 2.2 million customers in Texas. Aetna is now offering the service in Travis, Hays and Williamson counties, as well as San Antonio and Dallas-Fort Worth. It will be available in Houston in the fall.

UnitedHealthcare will offer the service to 400,000 customers in Austin and San Antonio beginning Aug. 1.

Last year, WhiteGlove signed a similar agreement with Humana Inc. to provide services to its roughly 400,000 fully insured members in Central Texas.

The deals give WhiteGlove access to thousands of potential customers.

WhiteGlove originally targeted consumers for private memberships, and still offers services to individual clients, who pay a monthly fee plus \$35 per visit. WhiteGlove also sells its service to about 150 companies, which offer it as a perk to employees. Fabbio said the shift by insurance companies to offer nontraditional, money-saving services has opened a fast-growing market.

A number of small businesses, including Austin-based House Call Doctors Texas, offer a variety of in-home services, and analysts expect more players to enter as health care reform moves forward.

"Our vision has always been about driving down the cost of health care while improving the experience for the consumer, and these agreements are validation that consumers and insurance companies are also looking for the same thing," Fabbio said.


WhiteGlove, which has 40 employees, raised \$3.8 million from 13 investors earlier this month, according to a securities filing. Fabbio said the company has raised a total of about \$8 million in debt and equity financing since its inception.

lhawkins@statesman.com; 912-5955

Vote for this story!

Find this article at:

<http://www.statesman.com/business/content/business/stories/other/2009/07/29/0729fabbio.html>

 **Click to Print**

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.