The Long-Term Care Discussion Group

Delivering Home Care During a Pandemic: Challenges Spark Innovation

Andrea Cohen
Founder & CEO
acohen@house-works.com
www.house-works.com
My Perspective

• Two decades of experience operating a large private home care company; employ 600+ direct care staff; serve over 300 (complex) clients per week that pay out of pocket for their care.

• First-hand personal and professional understanding of what customers (adult children) want and will purchase.

• Have seen over and over that adult children want to avoid the challenges their parents experienced and will do *everything* in their power to have control over how they age.

• Recognize that good advice isn’t enough for adult children who work hard to help their parents lead the best possible life. THEY WANT SOLUTIONS. And most don’t seek them until a crisis.

• Firmly believe that the integration of technology and service is necessary to manage the ‘silver tsunami.’ *It won’t work if we all create separate aging-in-place solutions.*
Our family disagrees on almost every health care decision we have to make. How are we going to get through this? **Worried.**

The stakes are high. We are making uninformed decisions, and always during a crisis. **Scared.**

My parents want to stay at home and they REFUSE to talk to me about their finances. How long will their money last? **Overwhelmed.**

My husband keeps shutting down. He won’t talk and he won’t listen. This is about his parents and not mine. **Frustrated.**

We can’t find my mother’s health care documents anywhere. **Frantic.**

We’re unable to reach doctors to ask questions and can’t get appointments for second opinions. **Stuck.**

Our family never talks about what’s really happening. Am I the only one who sees how bad it’s getting? **Alone.**
The Industry

Private Home Care has become a $30-40B industry—demand has skyrocketed, new entrants abound, innovation is an imperative and the investor world has noticed.

‘Tech-enabled home care’ is the new buzz word. 500M+ in PE/VC was recently invested into tech-enabled home care start-ups and one-off technology solutions that provide online tools, services and software.

Despite growth & investment, the industry remains fragmented and commoditized.
Choice and control are core values for the growing number of aging boomers who actively participate in their parents’ care and who do not hesitate to customize solutions for themselves and their parents.

Wealth dynamics are aligned. Boomers will pay for what they want to ‘make life more doable’ as they age.

Seniors who live longer with chronic and debilitating illness want live to lead productive and full lives. Life should be lived to the fullest and dying should be dignified and intentional.

Home is the optimal and often the most cost-effective setting to deliver care. In-home care companies that can manage complicated transitions and surround clients with a vetted and coordinated service network that is high touch, tech-enabled and extremely well-managed are in high demand.
- **Expect a marathon…..not a sprint.** Full focus AND investment is required at regular intervals to create a service model that engages caregivers, meets the demands of aging boomers and satisfies the requirements of strategic partners.

- **This is a ‘people’ business.** Despite the Caregiver shortage, private home care companies must be able to source and retain talent throughout the ENTIRE organization—senior level, managers and most importantly—direct-care staff.

- **This is a high touch service business.** Companies must be able to create an infrastructure that delivers service that exceeds customer expectations while figuring out ways to price fairly, expand margin and scale.

- **The landscape is always changing.** Staying relevant requires a vision of what customers and strategic partners will want (and pay for). Successful companies listen, remain agile and are ready to pivot as they learn.

- **Technology is ‘table stakes.’** As it’s difficult to prove value without data, companies must collect data from different sources, easily integrate and monitor this data into one operational workstream and get buy-in and train staff to use it.

It’s NOT Easy
Technologically employed to its fullest, technology can improve service delivery, increase access to care, and improve communication.

**REMINDER** that technology is still no substitute for human skill and compassion.
An Engaged Workforce is CRITICAL

Caregivers are more loyal to the company and more empowered to deliver better care when they have control over their schedule, get ‘real time’ information about changes, receive higher than average industry pay, and where they feel a personal connection.

In order to succeed, home care companies must create an engaged, empowered workforce that supports illness, advances wellness and works in relentless pursuit of their clients’ wellbeing.
Enter Covid
The very nature of home care makes it the safest care environment during this uncertain time.

Care is delivered one-to-one, as opposed to a group environment, and Caregivers are in the best position to observe changes in their client’s condition.

As industry advocates, our vision has always been to elevate the role of home and community-based services in the healthcare delivery system.

This is our chance to prove our value.
The Home Care Pivot

1. Ensure the safety of EVERYONE.
2. Buy Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
3. Hire and train (new) workforce
4. Juggle existing workforce; consolidate care
5. Have transparent conversations with Caregivers and families
6. Make decisions quickly and intentionally
7. Maintain company culture remotely
8. Innovate with technology as much as possible

AND THE LIST GOES ON.....
Future Predictions...

- Home Care companies will be called on to do more in the home.
  - Deploy ‘supercharged’ Caregivers full of useful information, strategies to reduce social isolation, and who are truly the eyes and ears of what’s happening in the home
  - Ensure Caregivers operate ‘at the top of their license’—receiving different levels of training, career ladder opportunities and engagement platforms.
  - Create innovate in-home care models and cross-industry partnerships

- Data proves value. Technology is the driver of data which will:
  - Provide families with REAL-TIME information 24/7.
  - Coordinate care virtually. Every client will be accompanied by important information as they transition through settings.
  - Link informal and formal care networks—so everyone is on the same page and working together.
  - Prove to payers that home care reduces hospital (re)admissions, trips to the ER
….. an opportunity to experience health + care differently
A Parting Vision…

• We will look forward to growing older rather than fearing it.
• We will have control over where we live, who we spend time with, what we do with our time.
• We will know that we don’t ever have to move unless we choose to do so.
• Our children will want to visit us because we live in places that interest them.