

For Immediate Release

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HouseWorks is First Home Care Agency in U.S. to Host Schwartz Center Rounds®

Innovative Program Promotes Compassionate Care and Teamwork

January 30, 2012, Newton, MA – HouseWorks, a leading in-home care company for seniors with locations in Newton, Massachusetts and Bethesda, Maryland, has announced that it is the first home care agency in the country to pilot Schwartz Center Rounds®, an innovative program designed to promote compassionate care, reduce caregiver stress, and improve teamwork.

Schwartz Center Rounds is a program of The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a Boston-based nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the relationship between patients and caregivers. Its Rounds program has been adopted by hundreds of hospitals and other healthcare sites across the country and in the United Kingdom, but has never been tried in the home care environment before.

Schwartz Center Rounds offer caregivers a regularly scheduled time during their fast-paced work lives to openly and honestly discuss the social and emotional issues that arise in caring for patients. Unlike traditional medical rounds, the focus is on the human dimension of caregiving. Caregivers have an opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings on a range of topics drawn from actual patient cases.

“The Schwartz Center is known nationally for its groundbreaking programs to advance the medical community’s sensitivity to the needs of patients and their families,” said HouseWorks Chief Executive Officer Andrea Cohen. “Caregivers in the home face particular challenges, and we are proud to partner with the Schwartz Center to adapt the Rounds model to meet the needs of the home care community. I know that our clients, their families, and our caregivers will be better for it.”

According to Schwartz Center Executive Director Julie Rosen, “We are excited to be piloting our Schwartz Center Rounds program in such an important and growing area of healthcare. Our research shows that caregivers are better able to make personal connections with patients and colleagues when they have greater insight into their own responses and feelings. We hope our program can help ease the stress and isolation that home-based caregivers can face and enable them to continue to provide high-quality care to seniors.”

HouseWorks recently kicked off its first Rounds at its Newton headquarters with a discussion of “Working with Challenging Families.” Led by a professional facilitator, a panel of three HouseWorks staff members – including a home care associate, case manager and scheduling manager – began the session by presenting a specific case. Other staff members were then asked to offer their own comments and suggestions and talk about their experiences. Approximately 50 people attended the first Rounds, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

According to Cohen, in addition to the emotionally challenging work of caring for a patient who is sick or dying, stressful scenarios for in-home caregivers include clients or family members who are overbearing or controlling, care-related disputes between family members, and family members interfering with a client’s recommended care.

Said Cohen, “It was inspiring to see staff stay focused on what’s possible for our clients, even when things get tough. The Rounds conversation always came back to the issue at hand – someone needs care, and we’ll do whatever it takes to get them what they need. Having open and real conversations about the obstacles that caregivers face makes great care possible.”

HouseWorks will conduct a total of five Rounds at its Newton office this year, and is planning to expand the program to the company’s site in Bethesda. If the program is found to be effective after a year, the Schwartz Center will replicate it in other home care agencies across the country.

About the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare was founded in 1995 by Ken Schwartz, a Boston healthcare attorney who died of lung cancer at the age of 40 and found that what mattered to him most as a patient was the compassionate care he received from his caregivers, which he said “made the unbearable bearable.” He established the Schwartz Center days before his death to ensure that all patients receive compassionate care. In addition to its popular Schwartz Center Rounds program, the Schwartz Center develops and funds other innovative programs, recognizes and honors outstanding caregivers, and supports policies that promote and advance compassionate care. For more information, visit www.theschwartzcenter.org.

About HouseWorks

Based in Newton, Massachusetts, and Bethesda, Maryland, HouseWorks is a private-pay in-home care company dedicated to helping seniors live independently. Known for flexibility, reliability and responsiveness, HouseWorks operates with an innovative, customer-driven approach to service delivery that returns a sense of control to adult children and their parents. Under the leadership of CEO and Co-Founder Andrea Cohen, a former at-large delegate to the White House Conference on Aging, HouseWorks has become the largest private single-site home care provider in the nation. For more information, visit www.house-works.com or www.facebook.com/houseworks.homecare.

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