

# M.D. NEWS

Special Medical Feature

## HomeCare New England

Health Industry Veterans Collaborate to Bring  
Higher Level of Service to Home Care Industry

By Kathryn Siranosian, M.S.

It happened more than 30 years ago, but Scott Crowley still remembers feeling somewhat helpless as he witnessed his father's health deteriorate from the devastating effects of ALS. Back then, home health care services were limited, and even though he was only a teenager at the time, Mr. Crowley says those limitations were palpable — and left a lasting impression.

“I’ll never forget being at home with my Dad when he was sick. It was something that definitely shaped my career,” he explains.

Now, after more than 25 years working in various aspects of the home health care field, Mr. Crowley has joined forces with two other seasoned Massachusetts businessmen — Dan Reale and Bob McIvor — to launch HomeCare New England, a certified and accredited 24-hour respiratory home health care company that prides itself on comprehensive, quality service for patients in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

A year ago, Crowley, Reale and McIvor purchased the business from the Claffin Company, a large health care distribution firm based in Rhode Island. Mr. Crowley, who has expertise in the field of respiratory home health care, was already



HomeCare New England President Scott M. Crowley

managing this particular division of Claflin Continuing Care, and had been doing so since 2002.

“This HomeCare division had a different direction in the business in the past, but then they hired Scott to manage it,” Mr. McIvor explains. “He changed the product mix and the personnel, strategically refocusing the business to sleep and respiratory, and adding the clinical programs to support it.”

In fact, with Mr. Crowley at the helm, the division became a regional frontrunner. Then, in November of 2006, an opportunity to purchase the business surfaced. Recognizing the company’s enormous potential (especially in southeastern Massachusetts where a disproportionately high number of aging baby boomers live), Mr. Crowley called on his two longtime friends. The three saw an opportunity to leverage their strong backgrounds in part-

nering with physician and hospital groups, and their proven track record in taking local providers and building them into strong regional and national players. They formed a partnership and acquired the company from Claflin, re-naming it “HomeCare New England” to emphasize their vision of geographical expansion northward, from Rhode Island toward Boston.

“We saw that we could take this business and expand it,” Mr. Reale explains. “Our goal now is to build a strong regional company that provides exceptional respiratory care.”

They’re well on their way. HomeCare New England currently serves Rhode Island, Connecticut and southeastern Massachusetts, offering a full range of respiratory home health care, including:

- Oxygen therapy
- Nebulizers (including delivery of medications straight to the home)
- Noninvasive ventilation (bi-level S/ST)
- Obstructive and central sleep apnea therapy (CPAP)
- Overnight and continuous monitoring for pulse oximetry
- Full line of durable medical equipment
- 24-hour access to a respiratory therapist
- Technicians who are fluent in English, Spanish and Portuguese

While “any company” can drop off equipment at a patient’s house, Mr. Crowley says that HomeCare New England distinguishes itself from the competition by providing that critical, additional component: exceptional supportive care. HomeCare New England has developed a series of comprehensive educational and clinical programs to support patients at home, and they administer these programs with a level of individualized attention that’s unique to a locally owned and operated organization, he adds.

“Over the past 10 years, there has been a revolving door of large, conglomerate players in the home health care market, but people aren’t happy with the end products,” Mr. Crowley explains. “We made it a priority to bring the personal touch back to the business. We pride



PHOTO BY DEBRA TROYANOS

**Far from just dropping off equipment, HomeCare New England distinguishes itself from the competition by providing exceptional supportive care.**

ourselves on the fact that a referring physician or patient can call to speak with the president at any time. That would never be possible with a national player. Every day, I tell someone here, ‘Treat people like they’re a member of your family.’”

At HomeCare New England, the company motto is “Never say no.” Patients, family members and referring physicians often have questions or concerns, and the HomeCare New England staff is specially trained to address these issues at an individual level. They work with patients, families and physicians to find solutions, and they are committed to making certain each patient feels comfortable and confident using the respiratory equipment that has been prescribed for them.

“Sometimes our respiratory therapists will set up patients in the hospital, and many times the patients are a little nervous,” Mr. Crowley says. “But the therapist walks them through it, though, telling them about the different products and how they will be integrated into their lifestyle. Other times, we do the set up in the patient’s home. In either case, we coordinate it all with the physician, including what type of follow-up is required.”

The follow-up component is critical. In fact, HomeCare New England has developed specific clinical programs that address education, monitoring and then rigorous follow-up for each of its three major service lines: continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, oxygen therapy and nebulizer therapy.

A CPAP therapy patient, for instance, typically requires a consistent year-long follow-up schedule to ensure compliance (see inset).

Likewise, HomeCare New England’s oxygen therapy program provides COPD and cardiac patients with a comprehensive care plan that includes not only regular equipment maintenance, but also education, 24-hour access to a respiratory therapist and follow-up visits. During the rehabilitation process, respiratory therapists work with patients to wean off, or at least minimize their dependence on, oxygen support.

Meanwhile, the HomeCare New England team also helps these patients learn to integrate oxygen support with both ADLs (the activities of daily living) and mobility outside of their home. To help with these goals, the company uses the most advanced respiratory equipment available today, including a new “auto-fill” oxygen system, recently developed by Invacare.

With short nasal cannulas and small, lightweight canisters that can be re-filled by the patients themselves, this innovative system allows oxygen therapy patients more independence than ever before. In fact, as part of the American Lung Association’s “Better Breather Club,” HomeCare New England’s respiratory therapists teach COPD and cardiac patients how to travel — by car, train, boat or plane — with oxygen support. The staff at

## Follow-up Key to Success with OSA Patients

Over the past decade, researchers have developed many innovative and effective treatments for people with sleep disorders. For example, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is now commonly treated with a new generation of continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) that uses air pressure to prevent collapse of the upper airway during sleep.

Although CPAP therapy has proven an effective treatment for OSA, physicians often encounter roadblocks when it comes to patient compliance. At first, many patients perceive the CPAP apparatus as unwieldy, and if the mask is uncomfortable, doesn’t fit or doesn’t work properly, they are likely to abandon the therapy altogether.

The team at HomeCare New England recognizes the importance of education, monitoring and consistent follow-up for patients who require CPAP mask therapy, and their respiratory technicians are specially trained to work with OSA patients.



PHOTO BY DEBRA TROYANOS

“CPAP requires good fit for good compliance,” says Scott Crowley, President of HomeCare New England. “Our clinicians bring different types of masks to the patient at the time of set up, so we know they get the mask that works best for them.”

In addition, HomeCare New England maintains OSA patients on a rigorous CPAP mask follow-up schedule. They check in with patients 24 hours after the initial set up, and then again at one week, one month, three months, six months and one year. With this schedule, the therapist can address any patient concerns and change the respiratory interface equipment on a regular basis. (Nasal masks and full-face masks should be changed every three to six months for hygienic purposes and to ensure proper fit.) Of course, HomeCare New England’s dedicated team of therapists and technicians is also available for additional visits, as needed.

“We’re committed to follow-up with our CPAP patients,” Mr. Crowley says. “Follow-up helps with compliance, and compliance means better outcomes overall.”

HomeCare New England will even make arrangements to ensure that all the necessary oxygen support is available at a patient's travel destination.

HomeCare New England's third major clinical program, nebulizer therapy (bronchodilator therapy), is also designed around the theme of supportive care. Since nebulizer therapy involves

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— Scott M. Crowley, President, HomeCare New England

respiratory equipment coupled with multiple medications, HomeCare New England respiratory therapists use detailed follow-up visits to ensure that patients thoroughly understand their medication regimen.

Patients, their families and local referring physicians all value this level of expertise, and they appreciate HomeCare New England's commitment to personal service, Mr. Crowley says.

For him, HomeCare New England is a company born from years of both personal and work experience in the home health care field. In short, he describes the company as a team of skilled, dedicated medical professionals who can be counted on to deliver compassionate, individualized care.

"Other companies over-extend themselves, or they don't pick the right people to hire," Mr. Crowley concludes. "But, it's simple, really. We don't make widgets. We take care of people. And, in order to do that you have to have the right people involved. We're here to help people live more productive lives using our equipment, and our plan is to grow this company, but

maintain clinical excellence every step of the way."

*For more information on the services provided by HomeCare New England, please call (800) 486-2572 or visit [www.HomeCarenewengland.com](http://www.HomeCarenewengland.com). ■*



The HomeCare New England team includes (left to right, back row): Heather Mastriano, Mareesa Robledo, Michelle Pineault, Andrea Botelho, Melissa Bernard, Scott Crowley, Dorothy Lunnin and Cheryl Firth. Front row: Allan Turcotte, John Marotte, Todd Rigley and Cathy Bonas. (Not pictured: Fran Jarvis, Marcio Tavares, Judy Barry, and Kevin Farley.)