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WhereToFindCare.com

New Web site puts key information just a click away

BY LISA VIDAURRI-BOWLING
THE NEWS-HERALD

Finding the right care for you or a loved one is just a click away, said Barbara O'Connell, a partner of WhereToFindCare.com. In May, O'Connell teamed with Joey Granz of Allen Park and Dawn Hall of Trenton and launched the Web site.

"Presenting consumers with relevant information in an understandable format to make choosing a health care provider easier" is one of the company's specialties.

For consumers, the site offers locators for health care providers, quality and satisfaction data and consumer ratings on 16 provider types, including hospitals, nursing homes and more.

"It includes 16 different provider types in every state in the U.S. — that equates to over 52,000 different providers," said O'Connell, a Westland resident. "Provider types include ambulatory surgery centers, charity care, comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, diabetes education clinics, home-based nonmedical nursing care, home health care, five different types of hospitals, intermediate nursing care, nursing homes, radiology services and renal dialysis centers."

She said providers can also utilize WhereToFindCare.com as a free alternative to expensive patient satisfaction tools.

"It is free for consumers, and most services for providers are free, as well," O'Connell said. "A targeted marketing platform to reach new patients at an affordable price is available to health care providers. Providers can purchase premium home pages via check or PayPal."

Health care providers subscribing to a premium home page can display more detailed and relevant information to prospective patients.

O'Connell said photos, virtual tours, hours and other useful information can be uploaded to help patients learn more about facilities and services. Providers can update their premium home page any time and as often as they like.

O'Connell, Granz and Hall are health care consultants and were researching quality data for a project before starting their business.

"(We) were amazed at how difficult it was to locate and understand the information out there, despite knowing exactly what (we) were looking for," O'Connell said. "Then when (we) realized there were several Web sites

charging consumers for this information, (we) were appalled. (We) then set out to create a better way for average people."

O'Connell said by creating the Internet site, the partners hope to make it easier for people to find quality health care providers and look beyond the clever advertising, jingles or scare tactics.

"To help consumers differentiate between what's important and what's slick marketing," O'Connell said about the trio's goal. "We also hope that by doing so, we can make a positive impact on the quality of health care by bringing issues to light and giving poor performers incentive to improve. We further hope to reduce the cost of health care by providing a cost-effective marketing alternative to providers."

O'Connell said there are a couple of reasons why it is important for patients to rate their health care experience.

"To help your neighbors choose the best provider and to provide feedback to the provider so that it may make changes and improve their service," she said.

"Health care experiences are a vital component to determining



Photo by E.L. Conley

In May, Barbara O'Connell (right) teamed with Joey Granz (center) of Allen Park and Dawn Hall of Trenton and launched WhereToFindCare.com.

whether a hospital, etc., provides quality care. A hospital might have given you your aspirin on time, but did they respect you and your family? Did they answer all your questions and teach you how to care for yourself after discharge?"

The Web site is updated regularly.

torial review within 24 hours," O'Connell said. "We designed WhereToFindCare.com to be an open system to provide immediate feedback, both positive and negative so that providers can learn from the public."

Within the next five years, the partners plan to add new services and employees.

"We also hope to be a major catalyst in health care improvement,"

O'Connell said. "We will reinvest in our community both economically and in terms of health care support. With the support of our community, we can help improve health care and reinvest in our local economy."

"We ask our friends and neighbors to get involved and support our effort by rating their health care experiences on our Web site and by sharing us with a friend."

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