

## The Renal Business Beat

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WellBound part two: The effect home dialysis and CKD education can have on the lives of people living with end stage renal disease. By Bittina Larson, Nephronline.com Assistant Editor

CEO Marc Branson told Nephronline.com he prefers to work with "nephrology evangelists" who share his mindset. He wants patients to be literate and for education to begin well before treatment. This could be where the importance of joint ventures with community clinics come in.

Unfortunately not all patients find out treatment options prior to beginning dialysis. This means a large majority, say, 80% of all patients, will receive care in a clinic-setting, 3 to 4 times a week, for many hours at a time.

For the first year Debbie O'Rourke received dialysis, she had no idea home hemodialysis was an option. She did, however, find it hard to fill the demanding role of being a single mom while filling her schedule with lengthily trips to the clinic. O'Rourke said she remembers feeling like dialysis was her full-time job, and that she had no choice but to plan around her treatments.

After doing a bit of old fashioned internet research, O'Rourke found information about home dialysis and stumbled upon WellBound by accident. "I did a search for things available in my area, and thought WellBound sounded like something I should check out," she told Nephronline.

O'Rourke's nephrologist had never told her that home hemodialysis was an option, but when she mentioned it to him, he agreed it was something worth giving a shot. "The rest is history," she said. "I have my life back, I feel better, and I can be the mom I need to be for my son."

With more "nephrology evangelists" patients wouldn't have to stumble upon information for themselves, but the tide is turning as WellBound opens more clinics across the country, and Branson's goal of "knowledge for all" comes closer to being fulfilled.

Ben Fritz, one of WellBound's medical directors, told Nephronline that where home hemo was once the "cutting edge" of treatments, a new modality is quickly gaining popularity.

"Nocturnal dialysis is the way of the future," he said. "People are realizing that treatment preparation is the only thing they need to take time for. Where they used to be have to keep occupied with TV or a book for a few hours, they can just plug in and go to sleep, giving them more time to live their lives."

Equipment setup is somewhat complicated but WellBound makes certain that patients are comfortable with the machine before beginning treatments on their

own. Typically patients train for 6 to 8 weeks, and a representative from the center will come to their home for the first out of clinic treatment.

"They have to know you are completely comfortable before they let you leave to do it yourself," O'Rourke said. "Kind of like taking a baby home from the hospital, its something so different that just becomes part of your routine."