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**Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. Leads Way in Protecting Vulnerable Southwest  
Michigan Seniors Through Proactive Efforts to Educate,  
Provide Vaccine Access**

***Key Lessons as 1st Anniversary of Pandemic Shutdowns Arrives***

KALAMAZOO, MICH. – March 23, 2021 – New data reveal that elderly neighbors cared for at home have been much safer during the pandemic than peers receiving nursing home care. In fact, according to the National P.A.C.E. (Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) Association, the rate of P.A.C.E. participants (cared for in their homes) that have contracted COVID-19 or died from it (through February 2021) is one-third the rate of nursing home residents.

Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. serves participants in and around Kalamazoo, Portage, Battle Creek and Albion and has been on the front lines of caring for some of the most vulnerable members of the southwestern Michigan “family”.

“We recognize that caring for the elderly in their homes is safer and offers many other advantages. So, we needed a strategic and creative approach to educate about the importance of vaccination, and then to safely maximize access and delivery of the vaccine to participants dispersed across southwestern Michigan,” said Laura Ferrara, Chief Executive Officer.

Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. understood that in order to maximize vaccine access, it would be far more efficient to collaborate with county health departments and local health systems to identify centralized locations where social distancing and safety could be optimized during vaccine administration. Once secured, the organization communicated frequently and helped participants overcome issues of literacy and access to the internet, as well as transportation.

“The requirements for securing a vaccine dose were daunting for this demographic – learning about the vaccines, signing up online, and getting the vaccination site. Our team supported our program participants through each step of

the process”, said Alexandria Lueth, director of operations for Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. “While the vaccination effort remains ongoing, approximately 60% of our participants already have safely received at least the first shot of the vaccine”.

The Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. team’s focus on safety – always a top priority – became even sharper early in the pandemic, leading to adjustments in protocols such as:

- Maintaining existing home-based services for participants and shifted provision of most of their center-based services into participants’ homes to minimize the risk of infection and protect their extremely vulnerable participants from COVID-19 complications;
- Expanding Use of Telehealth;
- Redeploying center-based staff;
- Adding social supports/socialization;
- Repurposing of PACE Centers for overnight care and respite care.

Through early recognition of the hurdles that would need to be cleared in order to maximize access to vaccines, Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. focused on short- and long-term safety for its vulnerable participants. Along the way, the organization learned many lessons about creativity, flexibility and even, compassion – lessons that will enrich Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E.’s protocols and approach even as things begin to return to normal.

### **About Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E**

Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E (**P**rograms of **A**ll-inclusive **C**are for the **E**lderly) is an innovative model that provides a range of integrated services to manage the complex health care needs of the elderly. P.A.C.E was created to provide participants, caregivers and professional health care providers the flexibility to meet the participant’s health care needs while continuing to live safely in their homes. The purpose of a P.A.C.E program is to provide comprehensive high-quality, economical health care services that are designed to assist the elderly with:

- Quality of life and autonomy;
- Dignity and respect;
- Life at home if medically and socially feasible; and
- Support for the caregiver.

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