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This book builds upon social work’s legacy of home visiting, which has reasserted itself in the current emphasis on community-based social work practice. The renewed emphasis on home-based rather than agency-based services stems in part from changes in funding streams and increased efforts to serve clients directly in their ecological contexts. Service delivery in the home is now common to forms of practice as diverse as home health visits with older adults, case-management services with paroled offenders, and placement-prevention and family-reunification services in child welfare.

The contributors to this volume, national experts in their respective fields, view the home as more than just a setting where social workers deliver services. The home provides the ecological context for human development and family interaction. As such, it can have a dynamic effect on service delivery. Chapters in this book present rationales for and overviews of evidence-based models for delivering home-based services across different client populations and social work fields of practice.

The purpose of this book is to enhance and enrich the social work profession’s understanding of approaches to delivering home-based services. Readers will become familiar with a variety of models for the delivery of home-based services and will be able to identify key factors and issues crucial to effective home-based practice with the range of clients served in social work fields of practice. Our hope is that by examining home-based services in a
variety of contexts, we can add to the knowledge base, elucidate and integrate key practice issues that emerge, and conclude with a conceptual framework for home-based services across social work settings.

Too often, the literature on home-based practices is fragmented and lacks a unified approach to the topic. However, there is much that unifies home-based services across social work settings. For example, many chapters in this text discuss the complex issues of hard-to-reach clients and their families, who might not receive services if they are not delivered in the home environment. Consumers’ health and disability issues are discussed frequently in this book, as this topic cuts across all social work settings for home-based services. Regarding interventions, delivering home visits usually involves multiple social work roles, including those of broker, advocate, and educator/psychoeducator. As a comprehensive overview of home-based services usable both as a scholarly resource and a course text, this book fills a significant gap in the social work literature. It is time for social workers to revitalize and reclaim this practice arena, and we hope that this volume will serve as a resource in that endeavor.

This book is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the historical context, contemporary applications, ethical complexities, and administrative and social-policy context for home-based services. The chapters concern the historical and current context for home-based services (Susan F. Allen and Elizabeth M. Tracy), the array of ethical issues that confront home-based workers (Kimberly Strom-Gottfried), administrative and supervision issues unique to agencies that provide home-based services (Kristine Nelson, Mindy Holliday, and Katharine Cahn), and the social-policy contexts (Cathleen A. Lewandowski and Katharine Briar Lawson) that inform and shape service delivery.

The middle section, the heart of the book, comprises eight chapters on home-based practice in social work fields of practice. These are early childhood programs (Susan F. Allen), school-based services (Cynthia Franklin and Christine Lagana-Riordan), child welfare (Cathleen A. Lewandowski and Katharine Briar-Lawson), child mental health (Mary Armstrong, Roger Boothroyd, Mary E. Evans, and Anne Kuppinger), criminal justice (José B. Ashford, Katherine O. Sternbach, and Maureen Balaam), adult mental health (Patrick Sullivan), older adult services (Kathryn Betts Adams), and hospice and end-of-life care (Ellen Csikai). To ensure that the coverage was comprehensive and uniform for the reader, the authors for each chapter in this middle section followed a common outline:

1. The population
2. Policy and agency context
3. Purposes and goals of social work home-based services
4. Theoretical framework
5. Empirical base
6. Practice guidelines
7. Issues of diversity and practice with populations at risk
8. Implications for home-based practice

The concluding section of the book consists of the final chapter, which synthesizes a framework for understanding home-based services, building on commonalities from the practice-setting chapters, and comments on future directions for home-based social work (Elizabeth M. Tracy and Susan F. Allen). An appendix contains addresses and Web sites for organizations associated with home-based programs, research, or policies.

This volume grew out of a longstanding working collaboration between Susan Allen and Elizabeth Tracy. We have learned much from each other about home-based services as we planned training workshops and wrote journal articles on the role of home-based services in school social work and on preparing social work students for home-based practice. We have benefited from the tradition of home-based services in social work and from the work of others in the field. Susan Allen would like to thank the many clients who welcomed her into their homes over the years, leading her to appreciate the value and importance of home-based services. Elizabeth Tracy is indebted to Dr. James Whittaker, the Charles O. Cressey Endowed Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington School of Social Work, for introducing her to the topic of home-based services and for mentoring her early and continued work in family-preservation services. We have each found much that is lasting in home-based services and that is true to the mission and focus of social work. It is our hope that this volume will introduce the reader to the range of home-based services in the social work profession and will form the foundation for further research into the effectiveness and expansion of these services.
Delivering Home-Based Services