

## PHYSICIAN: FINALIST

### Dr. John Forney

#### Doc at the Door

**F**or John Forney, house calls were part of the family history.

Forney, a family physician, started his own house calls-only practice, Doc at the Door, two years ago.

He attributed his interest in practicing medicine and making house calls to his grandfather, a public health doctor during World War II who traveled extensively. Forney remembers him making house calls to the poor in a village in Puerto Rico.

From him came Forney's passion for the World War II generation and for serving the poor, and the majority of his patients fit those categories.

Forney was born in Greenville and raised in Myrtle Beach and Houston. He went to medical school at the University of Texas after a stint in the Navy. Afterward, he returned to the East Coast and served his medical residency in Savannah.

Forney moved to Charleston in 2003 at the encouragement of his brother, who lived here. Forney worked in an emergency room and a family practice before deciding to start

his own house calls practice for the elderly.

"I realized there was a big need for it here — there are a lot of homebound elderly people," Forney said.

So he started driving to patients' homes across the area, seeing about eight patients a day. Many have diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

Although his practice isn't as lucrative as clinical practices, Forney finds the work rewarding.

"I really respect the WWII generation," he said. "I enjoy listening to their life stories and what they did during the war. They teach me a lot about how to live my life and I enjoy taking care of them."

Because his patients are on Medicare and can't afford to pay him, many of them prepare food for him.

One patient is 100 years old and lives out in the country. The family was so appreciative of Forney coming to see her that they gave him fresh eggs their chicken had just laid.

Forney hopes his efforts draw attention to an increasing problem in health care.

"Hopefully I'm bringing awareness to a huge problem in the Lowcountry and in the nation that the elderly who are homebound really need medical care," he said. "Hopefully more doctors will start doing this."

