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For Sick Children in the Hamptons, a House Call Is Near

By [Corey Kilgannon](#)



Dr. Seth Gordon arrived for a house call today on Flying Point Road near Southampton. (Photo: Corey Kilgannon/The New York Times)

Dr. Seth Gordon is a Manhattan pediatrician who serves many Manhattan families who spend a good deal of their summers in the Hamptons. So when he started going to the Hamptons a few years back, he agreed to stop by their homes for checkups and emergency visits.

His name and cellphone number quickly got around, and soon, he was inundated with calls for his services. Seeing a niche, he saw there were too many patients to while away the hours on a beach blanket. Now his fliers can be found all over the Hamptons, with his cellphone number printed on little pull-off tabs.

“In the summer, you get an influx of 200,000 kids out here and the pediatric centers don’t have the capacity to handle them,” he said. “These people are paying a lot of money to stay out here. They want good care. They don’t want to sit around in a waiting room, or wait three days for an appointment while their child’s sick.”

Dr. Gordon, 33, has no office out here. He makes house calls, battling East End traffic as he goes from hedge-lined estates to grandiose beach houses.

“I know every back road in the Hamptons,” he said on Monday while visiting several patients in Southampton. “The average day, I get in the car at 6 a.m. and finish at 10 at night and hit almost every town out here. Let’s see, so far today I’ve been in Amagansett, East Hampton, Watermill, Wainscott, Sag Harbor and Montauk. And I still have five more patients to see.”

Dr. Gordon is married, and he and his wife — who live in East Hampton while on vacation — are expecting their first child.

He carries his equipment in an old leather satchel, as if to drive home the old-fashioned format. He makes his rounds in his green Lexus, traveling with his laptop, baby scale and assorted medical equipment. Many of the ailments he treats are vacation-related, including allergies, ticks, bee stings, swimmer’s ear and sunstroke. Then there are the cuts, gashes and stubbed toes when children from the city find problems encountering the great outdoors. (And, yes, he takes insurance.)

Dr. Gordon examining Nicolai. (Photo: Corey Kilgannon/The New York Times)

On Monday afternoon, Dr. Gordon headed down Flying Point Road near Southampton and pulled through an

automatic gate into the estate of Damian Krause and his wife, Sharon Dorram-Krause. Their swimming pool shimmered in the backyard and their 8-week-old son, Nikolai, was up in his room, due for a checkup. Dr. Gordon weighed him and checked his heart rate with a stethoscope while Nicolai's nurse hovered.

The family lives in TriBeCa and Dr. Gordon is their regular pediatrician, said Ms. Dorram-Krause, a well-known hair colorist.

“We always had the best veterinarian in the city, and Seth Gordon is the equivalent for babies,” she said. “He comes to your house like an old-fashioned doctor. It's just so much more personalized than going to an office.”

Mr. Krause wrote Dr. Gordon a \$210 check and they made an appointment for two weeks later.

The next house was nearby, where Gail Tobias waited with her 1-year-old son, Jacob, who was beset with an ear infection and problems relating to his asthma. Dr. Gordon sat next to him on the large couch and toyed with Jacob, who giggled. Toys were scattered on the floor and a wide-screen television played “Dora the Explorer.”

“Jacob's much more comfortable with him than he would be in an office,” said Ms. Tobias, who heard about Dr. Gordon from the pediatric center near her Upper East Side apartment. “Doctors' offices can have a cold, generic feeling, but Dr. Gordon works one on one. The feeling is like a family member because it's a comfortable environment. Plus, you don't have to get in a car and drive to the doctor's office and wait for a half-hour. Every time I've called him, he's come over that day.”

Dr. Gordon prescribed an antibiotic and recommended a nebulizer. During the visit, his cellphone rang constantly. There were four calls from parents. One child stepped on a rusty nail. Another had allergy problems.

It was 6:10 p.m. and the doctor had five more families to see, including one in Montauk. Then his cellphone rang.

“Hmm, a 724 exchange, that’s Sag Harbor,” he said and took the call. “Yes, I really do come to your home. Where are you? Noyac. O.K., let me see who I’m seeing next.”

Now, he had six more patients to see today.

After hanging up, he explained: “I used to teach tennis in the Hamptons with some college buddies and we’d go to people’s homes. It’s the same format.”

Then he put his old leather satchel in his Lexus and drove off, bound for Noyac.

In a special edition of our Beach Patrol feature, Corey Kilgannon will be blogging all week from the Hamptons. E-mail story ideas and tips to him or to CityRoom@nytimes.com .