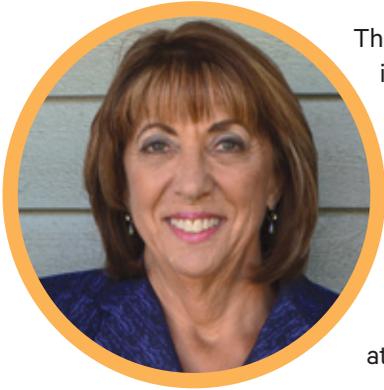


From the Desk

of CEO Geri Forbes



The healthcare industry in the U.S. is facing a landmark year as legislation continues to face uncertainty. Nevertheless, healthcare providers are continuously tasked to provide higher quality care at lower costs.

Rural health systems like WhidbeyHealth are a lifeline for many of us who live in rural communities. Local healthcare not only ensures patients have access to high-quality care, it is also a major contributor to the local economy by creating jobs in the community.

As WhidbeyHealth continues to expand access to services (such as the recent expansion of Women's Care to Oak Harbor), please know that we listen to your requests. We are continuously reviewing health department data and looking at trends in our state, with the ultimate goal of providing you the right level of care, in the right place at the right time.

What does this mean for you?

- Patients avoid costly ER visits when a primary care provider is more appropriate
- An expertly trained ER staff is ready to treat you when the ER is necessary
- Expanded access to our Primary Care locations with more providers added, including two MDs, two PA-Cs and one ARNP added to our three primary care clinics
- Three physicians and two Certified Nurse Midwives now at Women's Care in Coupeville and Oak Harbor

Since most of us who work at WhidbeyHealth also live on the island, we know we are often providing care to neighbors and friends.

We appreciate the confidence you place in us to meet your needs. We also appreciate the support you show us through emails, letters and Facebook comments. Keep the comments coming; compliment or concern. We need you to tell us what is working and where we can improve.

Finally, a friendly reminder during this flu season: Wash your hands, cover your cough, drink fluids and get enough rest. If we can help to keep you healthy, much of our mission is accomplished!

Geri Forbes

Senior Falls Prevention

Please, seniors, don't go on that roof and please give away those ladders!

According to the National Council on Aging, falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. However, falling is not an inevitable result of aging. Through practical lifestyle adjustments, falls prevention programs and community partnerships, the number of falls among seniors can be hugely reduced and our EMS team is a huge part of the solution.

WhidbeyHealth EMS and WhidbeyHealth physical therapists work with the Oak Harbor Senior Center through the "Aging Mastery Program," where they speak quarterly about Senior Falls Prevention. EMS also performs "Home Safety Surveys" with a focus on preventing falls in the home, which account for 85 percent of all falls.

"We install falls prevention devices in the home to encourage and allow our seniors to age in place and maintain their independence," says paramedic Robert May, who is also the EMS Injury Prevention Coordinator.

Visit whidbeyhealth.org/stayhealthy/classes-and-programs to see a list of locations that offer "Fitness for Seniors on Whidbey Island."

