



Happenings

April 9, 2018

News

Island County Makes National Honor Roll of Healthy Communities

Island County made the top 36 of the 2018 U.S. News' Healthiest Communities Honor Roll at #26. The honor roll is a component of U.S. News & World Report's inaugural healthiest communities' rankings.

According to Becker's Hospital Review, the project scores nearly 3,000 counties on approximately 80 indicators across 10 categories: population health, equity, education, economy, housing, food and nutrition, environment, public safety, community vitality and infrastructure. Researchers then identified the top 500 healthiest communities.

Although the communities named to the honor roll vary in location from rural to urban and in median income range, area of the country and population, etc., the common factors among all of them are life expectancy to age 81 and health insurance coverage among their residents of close to 90 percent.

Location and population have strong effects on healthcare delivery, the report concluded, and it seems that the Pacific states averaged four times better than their South Atlantic counterparts.

Read the full article here: <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/honor-roll>.



WhidbeyHealth Updates

Hospital Commissioner Ron Wallin Brings Home WRHA Award

The Washington Rural Health Association (WRHA) named its Rural Health Award Winners for 2018 and Whidbey Public Hospital District Commissioner and Board President, Ron Wallin, was one of its recipients,

Wallin received the award for “Outstanding Contribution to Rural Health” at the WRHA Awards ceremony on March 27 at the NW Regional Rural Health Conference in Spokane, Wash.

This award is based on the overall contributions a nominee has made to benefit rural health. The award is for nominees who have, over the course of their careers, made significant impacts in rural health across the state. Award recipients are selected based on their creativity, unselfishness, compassion and cooperative attitude in seeking ways to make lasting contributions to rural health care.

Congratulations and gratitude for his service to our community were offered to Commissioner Wallin at the hospital board meeting in March and personally by CEO Geri Forbes, who accompanied Wallin to Spokane, where he accepted his award.

CEO Geri Forbes celebrates Commissioner Ron Wallin's WRHA award with him in Spokane, Wash. in March.



Public Meeting on Rural Health Loan Attracts Small Crowd

WhidbeyHealth invited the public to a meeting on March 21 at which CFO Ron Telles explained the specifics about a \$20 million low-interest loan sought from the USDA Rural Health loan program. The loan would finance long overdue infrastructure in its original building and pay for cost overruns of its new wing.

Some 25 people attended the public meeting in the medical center's cafeteria, many of them current and former employees.

Telles explained that the federal government loan is the best choice for the health system to seek over other options, such as revenue bonds and general obligation bonds. It could be paid off over 30 to 40 years, he said, with a locked-in interest rate between 3.25 to 3.75 percent.

Source: South Whidbey Record

Recognition Ceremony Gets Warm Community Response

After posting 15 photos of the recent WhidbeyHealth service awards, the response from the Facebook community was one of pride and encouragement.

About 1,500 people responded to the post, which recorded the event at which 52 employees were honored for having worked at the hospital or clinics for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 or 40 years.

Echoed by most was the sentiment expressed by community member and our “Facebook Friend” Kathy Mouw who wrote: *Congratulations to all those hard-working and dedicated people, for your many years of service at Whidbey Health...paid and volunteer alike.*

Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Sanford is wowed by the longevity of her staff, including Deborah Grothaus Armstrong who has been with the hospital for 40 years and her colleague, Belinda Hawkins, RN, who has dedicated 35 years.

“It is no longer the rule but the exception to have employees stay in an organization for 35 and 40 years,” said Sanford.

“The rich knowledge of history over time that they bring to the organization is invaluable. Congratulations to both Deborah and Belinda, and to all these wonderful staff members, for their years of commitment and service to our organization.”



Deborah Grothaus Armstrong, RN receives congratulations for her 40 years of service at WhidbeyHealth Medical Center from Jamey Pennington, Linda Gipson, WhidbeyHealth board members and other staff. Below clockwise from left are Belinda Hawkins, RN of 35 years; Ellen Giles, RN of 30 years and Paramedic Richard King of 15 years.



Did you know?

New Medicare Cards Out This Month

Beginning in April 2018, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will start mailing new Medicare cards to all people with Medicare. A new alpha-numeric identifier will replace the current Social Security Number-based identifier. This roll-out will occur over a several month period, based upon the geographic location of the Medicare beneficiary.

If you are a Medicare beneficiary, please watch your mail closely over the next few months for notifications from Medicare relating to this change.

People with Medicare should use the new card once they receive it, but either the Social Security Number-based (old) card or the new random alphanumeric-based numbers can be used through December 2019. Beginning Jan. 1 2020, only the new card will be usable.



WhidbeyHealth Events

Easter Bunny Spotted Hopping Around Hospital at WhidbeyHealth

Employee Council members stuffed 1,300 plastic Easter eggs on Friday, March 30 which they then hid in and around 46 departments at WhidbeyHealth.

Staff was encouraged to hunt for the eggs, which not only contained sweet treats, but also money. A total of \$285 was hidden and then found.



The Easter Bunny (aka Sherri Anderson) hopped around the hospital on Friday, March 30, while handing out treat-filled plastic eggs. Some eggs were said to contain money and hospital staff were seen racing to find those "golden eggs."

WhidbeyHealth Events

Foundation's Next Annual Gala is Saturday, June 2

WhidbeyHealth Foundation's second annual Gala dinner, dance and auction, "Growing Together," will be held on Saturday, June 2 at Dancing Fish Vineyards in Freeland.

Join us for this magical evening of fabulous food, fine wines and atmospheric décor reflecting the natural beauty of summer on Whidbey Island!

To receive an invitation, contact Helen Taylor at taylorh@whidbeyhealth.org.



The Foundation's inaugural gala of 2017 was a roaring success. Smiling for the camera at last year's gala are Julie and Dr. Doug Langrock (in foreground) with Kit Maret and Ron Wallin.

Relay for Life Bake Sale Raises \$560

It's that time of year when Relay for Life teams are gearing up for Whidbey Island's **Friday, June 1 and Saturday, June 2** all night walk-the-track event to raise funds for the American Cancer Society.

The WhidbeyHealth team put together a pre-Easter bake sale on Friday, March 30 that brought out the best bakers and garnered \$560 for the cause.

Thanks to all who organized, baked and bought!

See you on the Oak Harbor Middle School track!



Luminaries light up the Oak Harbor Middle School track last year at Whidbey Island's Relay for Life event in June. Below, WhidbeyHealth accounting associate Jenny Peace at the Relay in 2016.

