THE PULSE
Looking Ahead

- COVID-19 Vaccine & Testing
- NEW WhidbeyHealth Community Pharmacy
- WhidbeyHealth Heroes
- Cancer Center
- Total Joint Replacement

January 2021
Volume 29
Dear Neighbors and Friends,

As always, I hope this letter finds you healthy and well. This year is new, and there is so much to be optimistic about! The Robert and June Sebo Health Education Center and adjoining conference rooms have been transformed to a vaccination clinic, prepared to administer vaccine to as many patients per day as possible. Volunteers from all over the island arrive every day to assist staff with administering the vaccine. Slowly but surely, this island is being made safer and stronger.

In 2020, we had the extraordinary privilege of witnessing firsthand how Whidbey Islanders respond when there are critical needs. The outpouring of support for WhidbeyHealth Foundation’s “Together, We Care!” 2020 fundraising campaign reflected the generosity and genuine concern for others—embodying exactly what our island is known for.

In just six short weeks, donors responded with gifts of over $65,000 to help WhidbeyHealth to meet the challenge of providing quality healthcare in our rural community.

For this we say a heartfelt “Thank You!” With your support, WhidbeyHealth will begin 2021 more prepared than ever to meet the challenges ahead. Your donations support outstanding care for patients and their families, providing equipment and training when it is needed the most.

Mark your calendar! Our annual Gala event, “Blue Skies Ahead!” is planned for Saturday, June 5th. We hope to have a fully live event to celebrate our healthcare successes but of course we will follow all COVID-related guidelines as they apply to our fundraising efforts. In addition to the Gala, the most beautiful bike event in the Pacific Northwest, the Tour de Whidbey, will be taking place island-wide on August 15th. With these events, our community comes together to support our goal and keep Whidbey healthy, and we invite you to join us.

Whatever 2021 may bring, we know that strengthening healthcare strengthens us all!

Together, we care!

Warmly,

Helen Taylor
Executive Director

WhidbeyHealth

2020 showed us the importance of WhidbeyHealth to our Island community. Commuting off island for testing would have been inaccessible for many of our neighbors. Without WhidbeyHealth, local high-quality primary care close to home would be impossible.

We have learned how fortunate we are to have our own healthcare system, professionally staffed by our own neighbors, and accessible in our neighborhoods.

Several continuous quality improvement initiatives are underway. We are focusing on retention and recruitment of excellent providers. Work continues to improve our technology with critical upgrades.

Each of us is glad to have received your input and we encourage you to stay in touch. Visit our web page to learn more about the Board, including how you can attend our regular meetings online. Also, please consider supporting the WhidbeyHealth Foundation to defray the millions of dollars in COVID-19 related costs.

To your good health.

Ron Wallin, President
WhidbeyHealth Board of Commissioners

Make Way for 2021

Before we close the book on 2020, there are many things that I am thankful for and would like to share with our community.

Thank you to everyone—employees and our community, who stepped up and helped confront the extraordinarily difficult circumstances that 2020 presented. Your willingness and ability to meet challenges head-on, cheer us on to give us courage and confidence and hope for the future. To our communities who entrust us with their health and supported us during difficult times: your support allowed us to continue to provide excellent patient care, close to home.

2021 will be a year of forward movement with hope for a healthier future. We have started administering the COVID-19 vaccine to our healthcare workers and our elderly community members. We plan to reach additional community groups to follow in the coming months. Let’s all work together and lean into a new beginning of hope and health.

This year will emphasize our continued focus on putting our patients first. We are more prepared than ever to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Your willingness to meet challenges head-on, cheer us on to give us courage and confidence and hope for the future. To our communities who entrust us with their health and supported us during difficult times: your support allowed us to continue to provide excellent patient care, close to home.

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This year will emphasize our continued focus on putting our patients first. We are grateful to be recognized by Press Ganey as one of only 10 hospitals in the United States to receive their Guardian of Excellence Award for Clinical Quality. Our focus will be to have our first hospital accreditation by DNV this year. In the coming months, I will have updates in the PULSE on plans for renovations to offer new services and expanded procedures, new providers, new awards, and additional insight into the financial challenges of operating a health system in a rural setting.

I look forward to 2021 with hope and excitement, and I look forward to engaging with our community to make WhidbeyHealth the preeminent example of what community healthcare can be.

I will close this with another statement of gratitude for your support of our team, a truly exceptional group who make me proud every single day.

With hope and gratitude,
Ron Telles, CEO

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With hope and gratitude,
**Nurses at the top of their game**

If there was a common theme for nurses everywhere in 2020 it would have been ‘Collaborate and Communicate.’ Last year presented a unique situation with the pandemic, the likes of which don’t come around too often and nurses everywhere were challenged to adapt and overcome while fighting for the lives of all their patients. Since the early days of the pandemic, nearly a year ago, the nursing profession and the specializations within have proven more impactful than ever.

Due to the experience gained battling the coronavirus pandemic, we’ve seen a beneficial change set in motion by the lessons learned each day. Our nurses have developed a stronger partnership with our providers, both in the standard clinical setting as well as when treating acutely ill patients - like those afflicted with COVID-19. From additional collaboration opportunities and strengthened partnerships with the providers, to nurses continuing to work at the peak of their licensure to ensure the best patient outcomes.

With nearly a year of the pandemic in the rear view, we are really seeing how important and impactful it is for our nurses to get ahead of and actively continue their education. Throughout 2020, during my rounds, I would come across nurses poring over the latest guidance and treatment recommendations, and most importantly, coming together to share what they’ve learned, share those best practices, and generally foster a communal sense of communication throughout our organization. This of course, has led to an improved experience for every patient they care for.

We’ve seen how important coming together and uniting is to battling a pandemic, but we’re also seeing something else - opportunity. Throughout this past year, with the new level of engagement towards collaboration with other disciplines, a real opportunity has presented itself in the form of emergency planning. Living on an island in a rural setting, it has never been more important to be able to plan for emergencies or possible future epidemics or pandemics.

Our COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic is a great example. Our Emergency Room supervisor scaled up the skill set that she has and put in a remarkable amount of effort to establish our Vaccine Clinic, partnering with multiple local jurisdictional groups to have a truly coordinated effort to administer vaccines to Island County residents.

I am proud of the work that we are doing for our community and look forward to a healthy 2021.

Erin Wooley,
RN, MSN, CENP
Chief Nursing Officer

**Local Vaccination Underway**

Immediately after becoming certified by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), our team began vaccinating healthcare providers in Island County. As an approved ‘open’ vaccination provider, we acquired the necessary refrigeration and pharmacy equipment and have vaccinated as many as 200 patients daily since mid-December. Currently, we are following the DOH guidelines for the phased approach which has expanded eligibility to persons 65 years of age or older and those over 50 who live in multi-generational households.

Demand for vaccination has greatly outstripped available supply and we are receiving far less vaccine each week than had been projected. As a result, many patient appointments have had to be cancelled for lack of vaccine doses. Moving forward, the clinic and our scheduling system will add available vaccination spaces to our schedule as soon as vaccine is received. Additional appointment spaces will be limited to the number of doses available at which point at which point no additional vaccination spaces will be added to the scheduling system until the next allotment of vaccine is received.

WhidbeyHealth is incredibly disappointed to be in this position. Three weeks ago, we were asked by the State to ramp up our capacity to vaccinate community members, and we have done that. However, the State’s distribution plan for vaccines has now changed. Vaccine that has been directed to hospitals is being redirected to support state-run mass vaccination sites.

WhidbeyHealth has three COVID-19 swab testing stations now operating in our community, including the Medical Center in Coupeville.

Anyone can be tested, regardless of symptoms, if any. The hotline scheduler will arrange your appointment at the station most readily available to you.

Advance registration is required to prevent waiting lines. Help schedule adequate staff, and manage our inventory of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies.

Call 360.240.4055 weekdays from 9:00am - 5:00pm to arrange your appointment.

**Testing Locations:**
- WhidbeyHealth Medical Center (Coupeville)
- WhidbeyHealth Walk-In Clinic Clinton
- WhidbeyHealth Primary Care Cabot Drive (Oak Harbor)

Your health is paramount to everything we do at WhidbeyHealth and we will do everything possible to ensure the fastest turn-around time possible for your testing and results.

Please note that health insurers may not cover testing for people without symptoms or a recent exposure. We suggest that you call your insurance provider with any questions about coverage.
Here’s a complete list of our 2020 Heroes.

March
- Vickie Longshore (Administrative Assistant, Nursing)
- Teri Crane (HIM Technician, HIM)
- Alison Wells (Sterile Processing, Surgical Services)
- PC Cable (Manager, Home Health & Hospice)

April
- Ashley Faulkse (Radiologic Technician, DI)
- Bert Balagot (Trauma Coordinator, ED)
- Stacia Ott (RN, Women’s Care)
- Stephanie Wilson (Patient Registrar, Specialty Clinics)

May
- Eufemia (Femi) Smith (CNA, Inpatient Services)
- Tiffani Blazek (Medical Scribe, Inpatient Services)
- Jacqueline Bassett (Manager, WhidbeyHealth Family Birth Place)

June
- Jeff Sibley (Systems Admin, IT)
- Tim Waldner (Executive Director Plant Ops & Facilities)

July
- Ginny Caldwell (Support Analyst, IT)
- Norma Cline (Nutrition Assistant, Food & Nutrition)
- Desiree Dudley (Operations Supervisor, Clinics)
- Tammy Woollot (Supervisor, HIM)

August
- Michelle Aube (Nurse Anesthetist, Anesthesiology)
- Emma Sper (Nutrition Assistant, Food & Nutrition)
- Isel Brown (Patient Registrar, Sleep Center)
- Jacqueline Bassett (Manager, WhidbeyHealth Family Birth Place)

September
- Brittany Kane (Nurse Practitioner, Palliative Care)
- Peter Carter (Maintenance Tech, Facilities & Plant)
- Malea Ivy (Coder, HIM)
- Debbie Reis (Manager, Emergency Department)

October
- Vanessa Soliman (CNA, Inpatient Services)
- Robert Huff (Telecom Engineer, Facilities & Plant Ops)
- Maria Reyes (Manager, Patient Access)
- Mina Yousef, MD (Hospitalist)
- Curtis Shumate (Manager, Inpatient Services)

November
- Helen Parasio (RN, Inpatient Services)
- Mary Hunter (RN, Inpatient Services)
- Jay Lujan (Radiologic Technologist, DI)
- Meghan McCrorley, MD (Physician, Women’s Care)

December
- Mary Leah Oman, MD (Surgical Care)
- Wanda Smith, RN (Hospice Care)
- Myla Becker, RN (Hospice Care)
- Wanda Smith, Medical Assistant (Surgical Care)

What is a WhidbeyHealth HERO?
A WhidbeyHealth Hero is someone who helps to shape and define the patient and employee experience at WhidbeyHealth; someone who is an intentional contributor to our success, someone who is an exceptional healthcare professional providing exceptional care to our patients and community - be it in a clinical, support services, or administrative role. Each of us may have a different definition of what makes someone a ‘hero,’ but we can agree that it is a person who is admired or idealized for their qualities, contributions and achievements.

Have you seen a hero in action? At the hospital, Primary Care, Specialty Care, or Walk-In Clinic, treating you with exceptional care and compassion? Is there someone you know who works tirelessly to keep the hospital running, caring for patients, or managing operations? We’d love to hear about them!

Celebrating our December 2020 WhidbeyHealth Heroes!

Myla Becker, RN (Hospice Care)
“Myla has fearlessly stepped up to provide exceptional care and advocacy for our patients at a local assisted living that is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak. She has stepped up to make extra visits to ensure their comfort and help connect family members with loved ones. Her extra care has been instrumental in ensuring these patients remain comfortable. This extra time and care allows the facility staff additional time and resources to focus on their other sick patients. It also gave the family members one on one support to gently educate them on their loved ones conditions and if warranted prepare them for the inevitable.”

Wanda Smith, Medical Assistant (Surgical Care)
“Wanda is an exceptional MA. Not only does she care for our patients with compassion and knowledge, always with a smile and a soothing/calming manner. Wanda is always early for her shift and doesn’t stop until her shift is finished. She “directs traffic” for the physicians, assists the nurses, charts in an orderly and timely manner, keeps our rooms stocked, maintains our clinic checklist and so much more. I am a 37-year RN and I have never worked with a more skilled MA. I always feel more confident when she is working with me, and on top of everything else she is always, always pleasant.”

Pamela Coon, Housekeeper (Environmental Services)
“Pam is always a pleasure to have in the ER. Even on crazy days, she never fails to be a beacon of calm, patience, and “It’s going to be OK.” She has somehow mastered being ever available when needed, while still finding time to address other areas in the hospital. Even when not assigned to the ER, she has come over just to check on us as though she has developed a sixth sense for when we need it most, and when the day calls for it, she can be counted on to have an epic store of corny jokes, giving us something to smile about.”

Mary Leah Oman, MD (Surgical Care)
“When I think of a WhidbeyHealth Hero, I automatically think of this compassionate, kind and respectful individual. Patients flock to see this hero because she provides excellent care to every patient she sees. Patients walk away feeling like they have been cared for. Listened to, and knowing they have been provided with all the information for them to make a decision on their care. This hero believes it takes a ‘TEAM’ to provide the patient with an excellent experience. She is always thanking and letting the team know how much they are valued.”
A Story of Joint Replacement Success: From avoiding stairs to dancing the two-step.

"Before my total joint replacement, I was experiencing lots of pain every day in my knee," Patsy Kolesar-Hynson described. "I was having difficulty warming up the joint each day which limited my mobility and my lifestyle."

Ms. Kolesar-Hynson sat down with WhidbeyHealth to share her journey and express her tremendous appreciation for her Total Joint Replacement Team.

The beginning of the journey
Joint Camp provides you with everything you will need to know prior to surgery. Two physicians and a nurse were with her in every meeting, introducing her to others who would provide pre- and post-surgical care. Operating room staff explained what it would be like in the OR, and the physical therapist met with her to explain the recovery experience. Dr. Adishian and PA Campbell spoke to her at length and in detail about the procedure itself. In addition, she was provided a comprehensive reference guide for home use that Patsy described as a great tool to use at home to keep you on track.

Surgery and Recovery
The day of her surgery, Patsy was welcomed like an old friend, as she describes it. "All of the wonderful people who helped me prepare for surgery were there when I arrived. It was an easy relationship to develop because of the compassion they showed throughout the process." After her total joint replacement, Patsy described the critical role that nursing and physical therapy played in her recovery. "Physical therapy and pain management are important parts of regaining mobility and my team worked through that journey by my side," said Kolesar-Hynson. "Without the Physical Therapists Kelly & Taylor, I couldn’t imagine having the recovery that I’ve had - they help you conquer your hurdles with compassion and understanding."

Dancing the two-step
Now able to be fully mobile, Patsy ended with this story: "I have been dancing (country-western) since I met my husband. With my old knee, I reached a point where I couldn’t dance through a whole song. Thanks to the team at WhidbeyHealth I was able to reach my goal over the holidays. My husband and I danced the two-step and enjoyed a glass of champagne to celebrate on Christmas Day."

To learn more, visit our Total Joint Program web page. If you have questions, we invite you to schedule an informal telephone call with one of the surgical team by calling 360.679.5590.
QUALITY CARE CLOSE TO HOME

We heard the request and we responded. WhidbeyHealth now has two walk-in clinics: one in Clinton and one in Oak Harbor.

When life’s minor illnesses and injuries require medical attention, our walk-in-clinics are close by, providing exceptional care, including diagnostic imaging and laboratory services.

Our expert clinical teams and staff are available daily for residents and visitors alike. From cuts needing sutures, to simple fractures, nausea, and colds or flu like symptoms, we’re standing by to help.

Just stop in - no appointment needed.

CLINIC HOURS:

7 days a week
Monday - Friday
7:00 am to 7:00 pm
Saturday
9:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Sundays
Noon to 4:00 pm

LOCATIONS:

Clinton: 360.341.5252
11245 State Route 525, Clinton, WA 98236

Oak Harbor: 360.679.5590
1300 NE Goldie Street, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

MyWhidbeyHealth Patient Portal

Patients of the WhidbeyHealth System benefit from two online patient portals – one for services provided at the Medical Center and one for services received at our outpatient clinics.

Both portals allow secure online access to your medical records, communicate with your providers and their team to request prescription renewals (primary care patients only). In addition, you can share summaries of your care to other providers or with family members you choose.

Sign up for the WhidbeyHealth Medical Center Portal if you had a hospital stay or services at:

• Medical Center
• Emergency Department
• Cancer Center
• Wound Care
• Diabetes Care and Management

Smart phone users can download the secure mobile application for iOS or Android.

Sign up for the WhidbeyHealth Clinic Portal if you were seen in one of our clinics:

• Walk-In Clinic Clinton
• Outpatient Services Goldie Street
• Primary Care Cabot Drive
• Women’s Care Oak Harbor
• Primary Care Coupeville
• Women’s Care Coupeville
• Orthopedic Care
• Surgical Care
• Primary Care Freeland

Create your account and access the MyWhidbeyHealth patient portals on our website!
Helping you stay healthy and active is our top priority. Here are a few ways we can help.

**COVID-19 TESTING**
Anyone 5 yrs. and older can be tested for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms, if any. There are several testing stations on the island. Call the COVID hotline at 360.240.4055 weekdays from 8-5 to arrange an appointment at the station most readily available to you.

**COVID-19 VACCINE**
WhidbeyHealth is pleased to be serving our community as an ‘open’ vaccine provider for Island County. Our community is eager to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and vaccination is a key step in ending the coronavirus pandemic.

**COVID VOLUNTEERS**
WhidbeyHealth and Island County Public Health are looking for volunteers to assist in our vaccination efforts. Both Clinical and Non-Clinical volunteers are needed.

**EMOTIONAL HEALTH**
If you or a loved one is dealing with the excess stress created by COVID-19, you are not alone. There are resources and services available to help, even if it’s just someone to listen.

**TO YOUR HEALTH**

**TAKE A HIKE**
Hiking is just one of the many activities you can enjoy while adhering to proper COVID-19 safety guidance.

**DON’T WAIT**
Many routine things in life have been put on hold, but your health shouldn’t wait. Putting off treatment may worsen your condition. If you feel unwell, contact your provider or WhidbeyHealth clinic near you.

**WHIDBEYHEALTH REHAB**
Rehabilitation is a key component of recovery after an injury or procedure. We specialize in general, cardiac, pulmonary, physical, occupational, and speech therapies.

**CANCER SCREENING**
Our nationally accredited Cancer team provides compassionate, coordinated care to individuals who face a cancer diagnosis. Our multi-disciplinary team has a single goal:

Helping patients and family meet treatment goals.