THE PULSE

Healthcare Heroes

- 2020-2021 Year of the Nurse
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Inspiring Hope through Healing
- Recognizing all healthcare workers
- Helping Women Find their Health
- FAST – Recognizing Stroke symptoms
- Community Pharmacy update

May 2021
Volume 33
Dear Neighbors and Friends,

As always, I hope this letter finds you healthy and well. The days are getting brighter and I hope you are feeling uplifted by the atmosphere of hope that surrounds us!

This month, we take the time to say thank you to our healthcare professionals. Thank you to the folks that are here for us day in and day out, ready to serve and to heal.

Our island has all the resources that make it possible to provide outstanding healthcare that is accessible to all – talented physicians, caring staff, and a community committed to working together to maintain access to local healthcare.

Throughout these many months of crisis, islanders have continued to donate funds to purchase critically needed equipment. Doing everything we can to maintain access to healthcare at the local level is a vital investment in our future.

The pandemic has also reemphasized the power of coming together to help. Your donations support outstanding care for patients and their families, providing equipment and training when it is needed most. From state-of-the-art surgical equipment to wheelchairs that are used day-in and day-out, your donations make “taking care” a reality here every day.

Donations that support WhidbeyHealth are truly an investment in sustainable health services for our whole community.

One thing that is clear: we can never take our health or our healthcare resources for granted.

The pandemic dealt our economy some huge blows; the ongoing struggle to provide services that everyone needs is real. Contributions from our donors are critical for WhidbeyHealth to meet the challenge of providing quality healthcare in our rural community.

Thank you for supporting local healthcare as a vital resource for all. Whatever 2021 brings, we know that strengthening healthcare strengthens us all!

In gratitude,

Helen Taylor,
Executive Director
Continuous Improvement

As you read this edition of The PULSE, you might notice a subtle shift in the content: thanks to the growing number of Islanders getting vaccinated, we can provide more information about helping you meet your health goals and how we can work with you to stay healthy.

In the area of continuous improvement, two exciting developments are under way. In June, we may have our first visit from the DNV Survey team. This is the first step in gaining accreditation.

DNV Surveys are not prescheduled they can arrive at any time. Once this first survey is completed, we can incorporate their findings into our improvement activities.

Second, a new team of medical and administrative staff has been formed to facilitate more open lines of communication and jointly collaborate to deliver superior patient outcomes and provider satisfaction.

Long-range planning is a constant process. Placing the Bayview land parcel on the market for sale is one step to support our master plan for facilities and the development of the site adjacent to the Medical Center.

In May we have celebrated our nursing staff as we do every year. Please join me in thanking them for their leadership, courage, and innovation as we continue to fight COVID-19 and keep all of us healthy.

Very best,
Ron Telles, CEO

Very best,
Ron Telles, CEO
Women’s Health: Exceptional care close to home

Healthcare isn’t a one-size-fits-all. We’re all unique! We all have our own needs and approaches to meeting health goals. Discovering what works best for you can help you build healthy habits more likely more likely to stick to for a healthier, happier you.

When it comes to taking steps for better health, we know it’s not always easy. Every woman has her own approach and is on her own unique personal health journey.

“WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care team is here to help you along your personal journey,” says Meghan McSorley, MD. “We’re committed to providing the highest level of care that we would expect to receive ourselves. As members of the community, we are committed to delivering that same level of care to our patients as well.”

From routine health and wellness exams to prenatal visits or the journey through menopause, our team of certified gynecologists, women’s care nurses, dietitians, midwives, and obstetric physicians provide personalized care for women of all ages.

Learn more, visit https://whidbeyhealth.org/womenscare
Nurses: Fighting for our Lives

Each May we celebrate America’s nurses, culminating with recognition of Florence Nightingale’s birthday.

For the first time in history, the National Year of the Nurse has been extended to a two-year recognition - and for good reason. Like their peers everywhere, WhidbeyHealth nurses have stepped in front to protect us during the pandemic, care for those who were infected, and continuously serve patients in our clinics and medical center. Nurses are at work in the Medical Center, at our Primary Care, Walk-In, and Specialty Care clinics ensuring that our community is as healthy as possible.

Undaunted, WhidbeyHealth nurses continue the fight – testing, treating, and vaccinating patients across our island. We also offer our continued thanks and admiration for the many retired nurses and providers who volunteered hundreds of hours to support our Vaccine Clinic, playing a critical role in our ability to administer over 17,000 vaccine doses to date.

“Thank you!” to nurses everywhere for keeping us safe during an unparalleled time in our history.

Update on COVID-19 Vaccines and Testing

WhidbeyHealth continues to offer swab testing at the Medical Center in Coupeville. Advance registration can be made by calling 360-240-4055.

WhidbeyHealth’s Vaccine Clinic continues to administer COVID-19 vaccine for anyone 12 years or older, subject to the availability of vaccine. Appointments can be made on our website.

Please note: due to widespread availability of vaccine from other providers, our public vaccine clinic will wind down operations on June 30th. More information will be available via our website and social media channels.

I GOT MY COVID-19 VACCINE!

Please remember to do your part in keeping yourself and others in the community safe. Wear a mask, social distance, wash your hands frequently and get vaccinated!
May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and one WhidbeyHealth provider, PA-C Griffith (Griff) Jones is part of a team of providers and staff working to improve access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care for our community.

Jones, a primary care provider in our Freeland clinic is currently studying at Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions – one of few schools which offer psychiatry specialization education and certification for Certified Physician Assistants (PA-C).

**Why is Mental Health Awareness**

**Jones:** There is a taboo surrounding mental health even though 57.4% of Americans will have mental illness in their lifetime. It is just as important to treat mental health in the same manner as physical health and to increase our comfort surrounding mental illness.

**Why did you decide to focus on mental health treatment?**

**Jones:** There is a significant shortage of mental health providers in our community. I’m most passionate about being able to make these mental health services more available. Our brain is an organ just like every other organ in our body. Stress affects the brain and if treated in an evidence-based manner, we can prevent suffering. On average people with mental health symptoms suffer for 11 years before seeking treatment.

**What misconceptions do people have about mental health?**

**Jones:** The most common misconception is that mental illness is somehow a fault of the person experiencing it – that they are weak and unable to cope. Part of the challenge is that language used to describe mental illness is what we use to describe our emotions. There is a big difference between someone who is experiencing emotional anxiety when compared to someone with General Anxiety Disorder.

**What is the most rewarding part of working with mental health patients in the clinic environment?**

**Jones:** These are chronic illnesses. I can see the progression in a patient and how their demeanor changes from one appointment to the next. It’s like you’re meeting the “real” person for the first time.
Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. Mental Health Awareness Month encourages us to fight stigma, educate the public and support people with mental illness within their families.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

1 in 5
U.S. adults experience mental illness each year

1 in 20
U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year

1 in 6
U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year

50%
of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

The President of the United States issued a proclamation supporting Mental Health Awareness Month, stating “Mental health is essential to our overall health, and the importance of attending to mental health has become even more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic…”

To read the entirety of the Presidential Proclamation click here.

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What is the most rewarding part of working at the Primary Care Clinic in Freeland?

**Jones:** I love the people that I work with; all fantastic people! Whidbey has been an excellent place to get established and get to know a kind and generous population of patients.

Learn more about Griffith Jones, PA-C (here) and our Walk-In Clinics in Oak Harbor and Clinton (here).
Here is what people are saying about our April 2021 WhidbeyHealth Heroes:

**Amy Billieu**  
*(HIM Tech, Health Information Management)*

Amy has been an asset to HIM since her arrival; her knowledge of the clinics, Centricity, and providers has made that position easy to fill as we had someone willing to take over the duties a lot of us found challenging (and she does it with a smile no less)! We have registrars and nurses from other clinics who love to talk to her. Amy also has a good rapport with our more frequent record requesters and patients; she completes requests so quickly and efficiently that there is little room for error.

**Murray Hubiak**  
*(HRIS Analyst, Human Resources)*

Murray Hubiak is an exemplary member of the Human Resources team. Murray not only provides outstanding service but genuinely cares for all individuals he comes in contact with. He is the type of person who sees the positive before the negative and how important of a reminder that is in the world that we live in. He takes tremendous pride in his work which is second to none.

**Brittany Kraner**  
*(Patient Registrar, Patient Access)*

Britt is a WhidbeyHealth Hero because she stands with and for WhidbeyHealth and its patients. She has been a dedicated member of Patient Access, who is the first impression of WhidbeyHealth to our patients. Working alongside her, I can attest to her tremendous customer service skills. Our ED patients are usually having one of their worst days if they are sick or injured and Britt working as a registrar is there to receive them and help them with her unyielding compassion. Her top priority is to make each and every patient’s experience at WhidbeyHealth, great one. She strives for equality and exceptional care for our patients and promotes the success of our hospital. She is so admired for all she contributes to the WhidbeyHealth team – she is a hero!

**Tim Anthony**  
*(ES Tech, Environmental Services)*

Tim is the epitome of what kindness and great customer service is! He is always ready to help with anything that needs done, whether it’s helping a patient find their way down the hall, cleaning anything, or finding a lost & found with a big smile. Tim is who we all should aspire to be like. He keeps us running!

*What is a WhidbeyHealth HERO?*

A WhidbeyHealth Hero is someone who helps to shape and define the patient and employee experience at WhidbeyHealth.
HERO SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Meghan McSorley (OB/GYN)

Dr. McSorley is the Superwoman of WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care and Labor & Delivery. Not only does she provide exceptional care to ALL patients, but she is sought out by her peers for her expertise in OB/GYN issues and for recommendations that would improve outcomes. Dr. McSorley is a fantastic listener and takes all the time needed with each patient.

Her compassion and determination to make a difference at WhidbeyHealth and within our community make all the difference in the place that she and her family call “home.” Not only is she continuing to serve our patients, but she has committed herself to a leadership role as the Medical Director for Women’s Care.

Patient Care Philosophy

• Seeking and receiving care in OB/GYN can be a very vulnerable time for patients. I strive to create a comfortable and welcoming environment in which patients feel seen and heard. Together, in a shared decision-making process, we create a management plan with an aim to help women live their best life.

• I’ve spent a lot of time and effort learning as much as I can about women’s health so that I can present information to patients in a way that is easier to understand, empowering patients to make more informed and meaningful decisions about their care.

After my very first appointment with Dr. McSorley, I felt heard and taken care of.”

Have you seen a hero in action?

Have you had a great experience with a team member at the Medical Center, Primary Care, Walk-In Clinic or our EMS teams, 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!

Click here to add your nomination for the next WhidbeyHealth Hero.
The BUZZ

"The Emergency Room was very busy and all the staff that I interacted with were extremely kind and polite to all patients – even the difficult ones."
- Emergency Department

"Over the course of being treated in the Cancer Care Center, I have found the entire staff exceptionally competent, caring, and knowledgeable."
- Medical Ambulatory Care (MAC)/Cancer Care Center

"Great, friendly staff and doctor made the whole experience less scary for my young daughter. Dr. Perera’s an extraordinary human being. Thank you!"
- Emergency Department

“This was the first time I’ve been in the Walk-In Clinic. The visit was superlative in every way! Thank you!!"
- Walk-In Clinic Oak Harbor

By the Numbers

Whidbey Island families take advantage of our healthcare system of 21 clinics and medical center.

Here is a snapshot of just how busy a year can be!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total patient visits</th>
<th>Mammograms</th>
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<td>214,286</td>
<td>3,258</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outpatient lab and diagnostic procedures</th>
<th>Cancer Center and Ambulatory Care visits</th>
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<tr>
<td>137,320</td>
<td>12,128</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WhidbeyHealth EMS runs</th>
<th>Clinic visits</th>
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<tr>
<td>8,399</td>
<td>41,867</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Department visits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23,926</td>
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</table>

This is just a small sampling of services we provide to the community. We will share more information each month.
Thanks to our providers, clinical and operations staff and everyone that works so hard to take care of us all!

* Figures for 2019, prior to COVID-19.
Commissioners Corner

WhidbeyHealth is a public hospital district, organized to provide for the health of everyone on Whidbey Island. Oversight is provided by a Board of five elected Commissioners. This month, we spoke with Kurt Blankenship, District 2 Commissioner.

PULSE: Tell us a little about how the Board works today.

Commissioner Blankenship: Today’s Board is deeply connected to the operation of WhidbeyHealth, more than ever before, through regular committee meetings, Board meetings, and individual meetings with the executive leadership. It’s much more involved than just a three-hour Board meeting once a month. A new program of work session meetings has greatly enhanced our ability to work collaboratively and to review and contribute to planning.

PULSE: Why did you decide to become a Commissioner?

Commissioner Blankenship: As an attorney, most of my 43 year long legal career has involved supporting and advising physicians and healthcare organizations, including public hospital districts like ours. Constant increases in government regulation have added enormous complexity to healthcare operations and I am in a unique position to contribute my experience to our local system.

PULSE: What’s on the horizon?

Commissioner Blankenship: We are engaged in an organized, long range planning process to improve access to healthcare for everyone on the island, while improving operating efficiency and reducing cost. For example: we hope to develop a tract of land next to the hospital to create a convenient, ‘one-stop’ location where primary and specialty care services can be combined with imaging and lab services. This is just one of many infrastructure improvements planned throughout the hospital system.

PULSE: What do you want the community to know?

Commissioner Blankenship: All of the commissioners are eager to hear from the public. I can be contacted at: wghdistrict2@whidbeyhealth.org
In addition to other celebratory and healthcare recognition weeks celebrated in May is National Healthcare Week – celebrating EVERYONE working in healthcare for their tremendous effort day after day. When most people think of someone who works in healthcare, it’s assumed that the person works in a direct patient care capacity – whether they are a provider, nurse, or therapist. What many don’t know is that there are just as many people behind the scenes making sure the hospital and healthcare clinics function smoothly and patients receive the best care possible. It truly is a team effort throughout WhidbeyHealth and the various interdisciplinary collaboration that brings our outstanding level of care to our community.

In honor of the tireless efforts throughout the WhidbeyHealth system, we are proud to share with our community a video that illustrates the breadth of services and access to healthcare available on our Island. We welcome you to click the link here to view our “Your Health. Your Community. Your Hospital” video, produced in conjunction with Island County.

Please join WhidbeyHealth in celebrating all our healthcare professionals this May for their efforts to keep our community safe through the best and worst of times.
Healthy looks good at every age!

You’re never too young or too old to Find Your Health. The staff of WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care and WhidbeyHealth Family Birthplace are committed to delivering personalized care to women of all ages. From routine health and wellness exams to prenatal visits or the challenges of menopause, our team of nurses, midwives, technicians, support staff, certified gynecologist and obstetric physicians provide personalized and individual care for every patient.

Why is Women’s Health so important? How is it different from a standard wellness exam?

Women have unique needs outside of a standard wellness exam that may include managing your pregnancy, contraception, family planning, sexual wellness, cancer prevention/diagnosis, management of menstrual cycle irregularities, incontinence, and postmenopausal changes. The Women’s Care teams recognize the sensitive and vulnerable nature of many aspects of women’s health and strive to make sure you feel comfortable, listened to and confident in the care you receive.

What can I expect from my Women’s Care appointment?

As a patient of WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care, you can expect exceptional care from the moment you walk through the door! During check-in, you will be greeted by our professional and friendly patient registrars who will ensure that all of your information is accurate and kept confidential. Our compassionate clinical support team will escort you to an exam room, document vital signs and ask you questions pertinent to your visit to report to your provider. Our skilled team of physicians and midwives are committed to providing you with the excellent care that you deserve at every visit.

How does the WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care clinic benefit our community?

The providers and staff here at WhidbeyHealth Women’s Care are also members of our community. It brings us all great joy to be given the opportunity to provide exceptional care to our friends, neighbors, and fellow community members close to home. Our goal is to deliver personalized care, tailored to each person’s needs. We want every patient to feel confident and comfortable in the experience and overall quality of care they receive from a local healthcare team you know and trust.

How does the WhidbeyHealth Family Birthplace benefit our community?

At WhidbeyHealth Family Birthplace we care for women and their families during life changing moments. We are honored to provide personalized care on their journey into motherhood and we recognize that the life story of everyone is being actively molded in the moments we share with them. Birth changes the community, and it changes the world because it changes the woman. It impacts the person she becomes, the mother she becomes, and the children she raises. Many of us are raising our own children alongside the babies we helped welcome into the world.
WhidbeyHealth Rehab Care

Voted Best of Whidbey 2020, WhidbeyHealth’s Rehabilitation Care is a multifaceted area of care that can help you return to your best self! Rehabilitation Care is offered at our Medical Center in Coupeville and as part of our Outpatient Services suite at our Walk-In Clinic Oak Harbor. Whether it’s treating cardiac, general, pulmonary, physical, occupational, pediatric, or speech therapies, our goal is to make sure you feel safe and cared for.

Rehabilitation Care plays a large role in our Enhanced Recovery After Surgery plan as well - as a key component to our Total Joint Replacement procedures. Not only will you receive personalized care with an individual therapist, but your therapies will be tailored to the strength building you need before and after surgery, as well as the healing and recovery after surgery.

Click the link to learn more about our award winning Rehabilitation Care at WhidbeyHealth.

Stroke prevention

In stroke emergencies, time to definitive treatment is everything. Rapid treatment of patients having a stroke can improve outcomes and reduce the possibility of disability and long-term consequences.

May is National Stroke Awareness month and the time is now to learn and share the stroke symptom warning signs (F.A.S.T.) with friends, family, and community. Knowing these warning signs, you might save your or another life from a stroke.

Does one side of the face droop or is numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person’s smile uneven or lopsided?

Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence?

If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to the hospital immediately.

WhidbeyHealth’s Emergency Department is designated as a Level III Stroke Center, having met extensive criteria for staffing, training of treatment protocols, and have demonstrated the ability to deliver life-saving treatment with incredible speed. For stroke patients every moment makes a huge difference in survival and the WhidbeyHealth team is well prepared to help.

For more information about our Emergency Department, click here.

To learn more about F.A.S.T. and National Stroke Awareness month, click here.
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 primary care, outpatient care, specialty care, and walk-in clinics.

**WHY REGISTER?**

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.

Talk with our registrar when you come in for treatment or visit MyWhidbeyHealth to register

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

- Medical Center
- Emergency Department
- Cancer Center
- Wound Care
- Diabetes Care and Management
- Rehabilitation Care
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Laboratory
- Sleep Care

### Sign up for WhidbeyHealth Clinic Portal if you received services at one of the following facilities:

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

**Once you sign up, you can access your MyWhidbeyHealth account on our website or by downloading the app.**

Smart phone users can download the secure mobile application for iOS or Android.
Helping you stay healthy and active is our top priority. Here are a few ways we can help.

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.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
If you or someone you love is dealing with mental illness you are not alone. 1 in 5 adults in the US experience mental illness each year. Learn more about services, and resources.

TO YOUR HEALTH
Helping you stay healthy and active is our priority #1.

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

PRIMARry CARE CLINICS
From infants to grandparents and all points in between, our primary care clinics provide wellness exams, laboratory tests, and treat illness and injuries, including minor surgical procedures—all close to home.

WOMEN'S CARE
From routine health and wellness to specialty services that address the needs of women of all ages, we're with you throughout your life's journey.

WHIDBEBYHEALTH COVID-19 VACCINE
Effective May 12th all Washington residents 12 years or older will be eligible to register and receive the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine. Get up to date details and/or schedule your vaccine today.

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR HOSPITAL
We're continually evolving to meet the needs of your diverse community. Check out this short video to learn more about the breadth of services available right here at WhidbeyHealth.

FIND LOCATIONS
LEARN MORE
VISIT TO YOUR HEALTH
LEARN MORE
LEARN MORE
GET THE DETAILS
WATCH THE VIDEO