According to § 2.2.2 of the contract between the San Juan County Public Hospital District and PeaceHealth, the District commissioners provide input, on a yearly basis, on the nature and scope of services and procedures at Peace Island Medical Center. Accordingly, the SJC PHD commissioners make the following recommendations based on concerns and questions put forth by District residents and patients of PIMC.

Coumadin program: There was a locally-based nurse who was in charge of the Coumadin services through clinic hours weekly and was on call as well. This service has been replaced by a visiting provider who apparently has cancelled visiting dates, resulting in uneven service to patients. We would like to see the regular services of a the locally-based nurse restored for Cumadin patients.

Dermatology: Islanders who are patients of Rosario Skin Clinic miss having their appointments here on the island. While the current telemedicine model is of value, many Rosario patients are reluctant to change medical providers and prefer to continue their in-person treatment with Rosario. We would like to see PIMC resolve the apparent contractual issues with Rosario so that islanders may once again have their treatment with Rosario here.

Alternatively, with on-site dermatology services no longer available, further integration of dermatology based tele-medicine with primary care liquid nitrogen ablation/uncomplicated biopsies and similar services should be available.

Adult/Child immunizations: Last August, PIMC offered a clinic day for free school physicals and inoculations. This program was a big success, with families lining up at the door before the clinic’s opening. It was an excellent program for the community and for PIMC. Childhood inoculation rates are abysmal on San Juan Island; improving immunization rates was recognized in the last Community Needs Assessment. We would like to see this program expanded with additional clinic dates at different times of the year to improve island children’s inoculation rates. Also, to add to community wellness, we recommend PIMC offer clinic dates in the fall for adult flu shots at a cost basis similar to the Department of Health pricing.

Suicide prevention and mental health services: The suicide/self-inflicted injury rate in San Juan County is higher than the state, with a rate of 15 per 100,000 compared to the state rate of 14 and the national rate of 12. The county’s rate for hospitalizations for self-inflicted injuries is 64 compared to the state average of 53. The last Community Needs Assessment also recognized the great need for services and outreach in mental health care needs. As a starting point, we would like to see public programs devoted to educating the public in suicide prevention and mental health in order to remove the stigma that is unfortunately attached to suicide/mental health problems. These programs could be similar to Ross Fewing’s programs on advanced directives. Governor Inslee has recently launched a program to recognize gun fatalities as a public health problem (80% of gun fatalities are self-inflicted), which could offer another starting point for community outreach.

Urgent Care: Please provide statistics for patients who have sought urgent care on Saturdays through the ED (number of patients and average cost) and a cost comparison between patients who seek treatment through normal clinic hours for a single complaint such as an earache or UTI versus patients who sought treatment off-hours through the ED.

Patient Ombudsman: It has always been important to gather, report, and act upon patient complaints, concern and questions as a means of improving our health care systems and the health care experiences of patients. The credibility of a health care organization and its relationship to the community is largely dependent on how well it performs this function. Now, under the Affordable Care Act and the resulting payment rules of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 30% of a hospital’s bonus payments are based on the patient’s experience of care. We recommend a specific person be named for PIMC who will be charged with monitoring and improving the health care experiences of PIMC patients, including billing questions. A common complaint is the difficulty patients have in dealing with a distant representative in Vancouver by telephone.

Respiratory Therapy Clinic on a scheduled basis. Understandably, the 24/7 emergency services cannot be supported with sufficient patient volumes vs. being fiscally neutral. In rural communities, RT includes home services and other treatment parameters. Perhaps this can be done as an important adjunct of a SJI EMS-based “Community Paramedic” services.

pain management

comprehensive reproductive health services, including long acting reversible contraception, abortion services, sterilization, and prenatal care as part of the primary care clinic services.