



San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1

Contact: Nathan Butler, Public Information Officer
849 Spring Street Unit B-5
butler@sjcphd1.org
360-378-2857

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San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1 (SJCPHD#1) is proud to announce that board member Rebecca Smith was appointed on May 7, 2019, to the 5-county North Region EMS and Trauma Care Council. She fills the only elected official slot for San Juan County and will simultaneously serve on the county EMS council as well.

Smith served as a San Juan Island volunteer EMT and firefighter for about two decades before retiring in 2017 and was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the hospital district board in 2018. She previously served a 6-year term as a Fire District commissioner.

“As a commissioner, I come from the elected official side and can offer ideas from the standpoint of what a hospital district can offer the system of prehospital and hospital care,” said Smith. “For instance, last month the district donated money for the long-term care feasibility study – that’s a part of the whole prehospital care system.”

Still, it will always be her experiences as an EMT that drive her approach to care and how it’s delivered: “When I took care of a patient, I would make sure the family had a way to follow the patient. Just taking the time to gather up the patient’s cell phone, wallet, glasses and other personal belongings was an important part of the call. Giving them peace of mind that their pets and home would be looked after is all part of the whole family approach.”

Likewise, that collaborative and holistic approach is what the EMS and Trauma Care councils are intended to promote. They help integrate emergency response to provide a more complete level of both prehospital and hospital care across the entire state.

“If our processes are different from each other, that’s a problem,” said Smith. “We work to share information and protocols, as well as to coordinate regional needs. We look for gaps in care. This is a grassroots system that helps support the EMS service statewide in cooperation with the Department of Health.”

Smith’s appointment to the North Region EMS and Trauma Care Council is particularly valuable as integration of EMS and Fire services on San Juan Island is considered in the context of regional prehospital emergency response.