



San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1

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Update to District Residents

Your local hospital district is committed to making sure that island residents have resources available to them to ensure care for their health. In an era where rural healthcare is under pressure nationwide, our innovative public-private partnership with PeaceHealth provides high-quality care to the public that is financially sustainable. Our Emergency Medical Services provide top quality prehospital care and does not charge coinsurance to residents.

In order to ensure access to affordable reproductive care for all, we also subsidize Mount Baker Planned Parenthood (MBPP) by giving them \$40,000 per year, covering about 1/3 of their budgeted expenses. On June 24, MBPP during their semiannual report to the Board of Commissioners reported that more than half of those given care were at 150% of the federal poverty level or less. Patients are charged on a sliding scale based on what they can afford, and receive services ranging from birth control to vaccines and screening to family planning.

Chair Anna Lisa Lindstrum said, “Choosing when and how to have families is an essential part of ensuring wellness for women and families and helps ensure that children are born into a stable setting. We are very proud of our work with Mount Baker Planned Parenthood, and as we go through our fourth year working with them, we hope for many more years of collaboration.”

As an integral part of healthcare on San Juan Island, San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1 is constantly working to determine how best to allocate its resources. Besides its current programs, it continues to evaluate the feasibility of long-term care, the possibility of integrating EMS with the Fire District, and more.

“We are realizing that particularly in the age of COVID-19, it’s a good time to sit down and think strategically about where we’re going,” said Superintendent Pamela Hutchins. “We have begun a process of reevaluating our needs, resources, and opportunities to better serve the community.” To that end, the District has earmarked \$5,000 for a consultant to assist the District through a strategic planning during June and July. This will include two Board meetings in July,

in addition to internal surveys and other discussions. This will help ensure that our resources are used efficiently and wisely. The public is welcome to comment, email hutchins@sjcphd1.org.

“We continue to make progress here at EMS”, said EMS Chief Kuetzing. “San Juan Island EMS went to a 24-7 in-station staffing model in 2019, which has led to significant improvements in response time. It also means more available staffing during periods where we are dealing with multiple calls at the same time.” Due to the significant challenges with decontamination during COVID-19, and the potential for increased calls, this has shown to have been a wise move.

Further, over the last several years, EMS has been very careful with its expenditures while also seeking state and federal grant programs. This has led to an improved financial position without extra expense to our taxpayers, enabling us to have sufficient money in reserves to deal with the immediate COVID-19 crisis while preparing for upcoming upgrades and replacements of capital assets.

Superintendent Hutchins adds, “From prehospital emergency care to supporting clinic, ER, and reproductive health services, we do it for less than many other districts and provide more comprehensive care.”