

HEALTH MATTERS 2.0

Lopez Island health-related news from CWMA, Lopez Island Hospital District, Lopez Island Fire & EMS (LIFE), and UW Medicine



LIHD: A Message from the New President

As we begin our second full calendar year of operations, the Lopez Island Hospital District (LIHD) is pleased to introduce Commissioner Rebecca (Becky) Presley as the 2019 Board President. Commissioner Presley takes over from the outgoing President, Commissioner Christa Campbell. Commissioner Campbell held the position of President since the inception of the LIHD in May 2017. During her tenure, Commissioner Campbell helped guide the Board through a lot of new territory that went along with establishing the District. The Board is very appreciative of the leadership provided by Commissioner Campbell over these past 20 months and looks forward to her continued active engagement in the Board.

Looking ahead, President Presley is committed to building on the progress accomplished to-date. This includes working closely with UW Medicine Lopez Island Clinic, CWMA, and Lopez Island Fire and EMS (LIFE). “Much of the groundwork has been laid which allows us to work together on specific issues of importance to the community,” shared President Presley. “Some areas of focus include working with UW to introduce new services such as allergy testing, supporting CWMA’s ability to assess future clinic equipment needs and support Lopez Island Physical Therapy as they will soon set up their practice in a new location, and collaborating with Lopez Island Fire and EMS to ensure a seamless care experience whether during or after clinic hours.”

“In 2018 there was a lot of effort placed on bringing community resources together to understand what’s working and where there are opportunities for improvement,” said President Presley. She went on to comment that she’s impressed with the strong working relationships among the health care stakeholders within our community. She also expressed appreciation that the LIHD Superintendent is ensuring we are represented at the table in county-wide discussions related to health care needs, such as the recent concerns regarding coverage by Kaiser Permanente for air transport. Additionally, in 2019, LIHD will collaborate with the San Juan County Department of Health and Community Services as they begin work on the 2020 Community Health Assessment. “Through our active engagement and support,” President Presley said, “we will be able to influence this assessment to ensure it accurately reflects the unique needs of Lopez Island. It will be a valuable tool to help inform LIHD’s long-term strategic plan and allow us to create a sustainable, island-appropriate health care model.”

In closing, the incoming President shared her thoughts on the health care environment. “The delivery of health care is complex, and being on a rural, remote island presents a unique set of challenges. I am honored to take on this

role at such an exciting time in the evolution of our health care services on Lopez Island, and I look forward to working together to create a model that is an example for other communities like ours.” While an ambitious goal, maintaining strong community partnerships will allow us to succeed. It’s why we are happy to welcome the Fire Chief and the LIFE Board of Commissioners as an integral partner in the new Health Matters 2.0.

Lopez Island Fire & EMS Is Excited To Join Health Matters

As Fire Chief, I would like to take this opportunity to provide a brief overview of *LIFE* and your emergency medical services here on Lopez. I’d also like to share a few of our short and longer-term goals aimed at better serving our community.

Many Lopezians are surprised to learn that *LIFE* is primarily a volunteer fire, emergency medical and rescue service. With over 50 members, *LIFE* consists of a three-member board of commissioners, a part-time fire chief, a part-time administrative assistant, two part-time support staff, three full-time career paramedics and over 45 dedicated volunteers. About half of the volunteers are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and the other half are trained as firefighters. *LIFE* also has an all-volunteer rescue team and a volunteer team of certified amateur radio operators (HAMS) who help during rescue and disaster events.

When you call 911 for a medical emergency you can expect to see the on-duty paramedic and team of EMTs. Under the direction of Dr. Michael Sullivan, San Juan County EMS Medical Director, the *LIFE* team will assess your needs and deliver emergency medical treatment. If medically necessary, the EMS team will determine the most appropriate transport method and suitable receiving facility.

While unplanned, LIHD and *LIFE* have spent much of the beginning of the year working together to understand why islanders insured with Kaiser Permanente started receiving denials for emergency air transport. After a concerted effort to align county-wide leaders, Kaiser is currently working with the EMS Medical Director to better understand the dynamics associated with care in San Juan County and discuss the denied cases. Anyone needing help should contact their air operator or feel free to contact *LIFE* for more information.

As we look ahead in 2019, one very exciting initiative that will be implemented

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early this year is a switch from paper to electronic medical records. This change will align *LIFE's* record keeping with the other EMS organizations in the County. The benefit of moving to electronic healthcare records is that it will allow for a more secure way to capture, store and share information.

Later in the year, *LIFE* is looking forward to engaging with community healthcare partners in the areas of Community Risk Reduction and Mobile Integrated Healthcare. Community Risk Reduction provides a framework to track and measure healthcare and fire prevention needs, which helps inform creative solutions. Mobile Integrated Healthcare is an approach currently deployed in many communities throughout the Country. These programs have shown positive results in helping to reduce hospital readmissions, as well as supporting patients in other areas such as medication management.

We remain committed to continuing to strengthen our community partnerships and deliver on our collective goal to ensure the long-term sustainability of our safety and health care system. We look forward to sharing more details of our collective efforts in future issues.

Yours for *LIFE* – J. M. Havner, Fire Chief

CWMA Moving Forward and Helping Lopez Island Physical Therapy Expand

The Catherine Washburn Medical Association continues to provide the building, equipment, and grounds for the clinic. We have been working diligently with the clinic staff and UW Medicine to resolve issues regarding emergency power and keeping the vaccine refrigerator at correct temperatures. We are working to improve alarms and notifications to prevent any unexpected problems.

One focus for this past year (actually starting four years ago) has been working with Lopez Island Physical Therapy to help them find new, larger space for their expanding practice. We are very proud to announce that CWMA has signed a lease for new space for LIPT at 192 Lopez Road (formerly Islandscape Nursery). It is ideal for LIPT's use allowing two exam rooms, office space, a waiting area, a bathroom, and a gym. The gym will be very light given that it used to be a greenhouse. The sun keeps it warm even in the winter. It is also convenient to the Clinic and central in the Village. The owner is in the process of doing several modifications to meet their needs. Target opening date is sometime this spring! As we do for the clinic, CWMA helps LIPT by subsidizing part of their rent and providing additional funds for new equipment and to help cover the costs of relocation. Lopez Island Hospital District is also helping with transitional funds to help cover additional operating costs while their practice grows.

From Terri Drahm and the LIPT folks: *"The new space will accommodate two therapists working at the same time and allow more flexibility with scheduling. We hope to add staffing to decrease wait times (currently 2-3 weeks). It is a bright space that invites healing and just makes you want to exercise! We can't wait to get in there--patients are going to love it and so are we!"*

CWMA wants to thank all our generous donors for a very successful fundraising drive starting in late fall 2018. Donations earmarked for LIPT exceeded the \$10,000 matching grant that was offered by the Van Camp family. THANK YOU!

Protect Your Colon and Stay Rollin'

The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is especially true when it comes to colon cancer, the second leading cancer killer in the United States.

You can ward off cancer and maybe even save your life by getting screened (tested) regularly beginning at age 50.

Screening can find precancerous polyps—abnormal growths in the colon or rectum—and remove them before they turn into cancer. And when colorectal cancer is discovered and treated at an early stage, about nine out of ten people are still alive five years later.

The Affordable Care Act requires that most insurance plans cover colorectal cancer screening for people over age 50 – at no cost to you. Your insurance company can provide additional information. You may need to get tested before age 50 or after age 75 if colorectal cancer runs in your family.

Screening tests for colorectal cancer include:

- A colonoscopy test looks directly into your colon and rectum using a flexible lighted tube with a viewing lens and a tool for removing tissue. It requires you to take a laxative to clean out your bowels, and the test is performed in a doctor's office while you're under anesthesia.
- A virtual colonoscopy uses special x-ray equipment (a CT scanner) to produce pictures of the colon and rectum from outside the body. These pictures can show polyps and other abnormalities. The colon must be cleansed before the test, but it doesn't require sedation.
- A home stool test requires you to collect and provide your doctor a sample of your bowel movement for evaluation.

Your primary care provider will recommend the best test for you based on a number of factors including your age, personal and family medical history, and other risk factors. Excessive alcohol use, obesity, being physically inactive, cigarette smoking, and, possibly, a high-fat diet can increase your risk of colon cancer. In addition, people with a history of certain gastrointestinal diseases are at higher risk.

Talk with your primary care provider about which test is most appropriate for you and how often you should be screened, 360.468.2245.

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The UW Medicine Lopez Island Clinic is excited to announce that we will begin offering allergy shots for our primary care patients soon. The clinic will work with patients and their allergy specialists to identify good candidates for this service. The allergy medication to be used will be shipped directly from the patient's allergy clinic on the mainland to the Lopez Island Clinic. This will ensure the medication has been properly stored during transit. Additional costs for the patient may be associated with the shipment. The clinic will also be ready to respond to any reactions that can happen with allergy shots. We will gradually add patients to this new service as we are able. Please contact the clinic if you are interested in receiving allergy shots at the Lopez Island Clinic. We will be happy to review if this option is right for you.