

CLINIC UPDATE

June 23, 2021

It's been nearly three months since Island Primary Care – Orcas took over operations of the two primary care clinics on the island, joining the former UW Medicine Clinic and Orcas Family Health Center into one clinic. We thank our providers and staff for their hard work and dedication over the last 11 weeks. We've celebrated successes and heard your concerns. This update addresses both and provides information on how best to access care with us.

Since our opening in April, the Clinic has seen over 1,900 patients. In addition to those visits, we have performed nearly 500 lab visits and over 240 x-rays.

We continue to expand and add new services for patients including:

- Same-day Access – We have increased the number of same-day appointments for patients who have been triaged and in need of immediate care. The additional same-day spots will enable us to meet expected summer increase.
- Urgent Care Needs – Whether a patient is brought to us by EMS or a patient presents at the Clinic with an **urgent need**, we immediately triage our patient and determine the next steps for care.
- Our providers are committed to covering after-hours patient needs. Physician triage and in-clinic services are reducing the need for patients to go off island for after-hours care. Whether it's a complex laceration or acute illness, we are caring for patients in real-time in the Clinic, on the island.
- We continue to expand our partnership with EMS to deliver high quality, compassionate care. Within two months of clinic operations, our After-Hours Steering Committee is pleased with the significant improvements in patient support and handoffs between EMS and the Clinic. We are planning a code drill this summer with our Clinic providers and staff alongside EMS. This drill is a mock emergency event that helps the teams navigate patient care coordination and communication, helping to prepare for an actual event.
- Our clinical staff will be training with our specialty teams in Anacortes next month in order to provide port-a-cath management services. We are also expanding maternity support services in the clinic. These services will eliminate the need for patients to travel off island for services.
- Expanded X-ray Services – Within the first 10 weeks, projected x-ray procedures were exceeded by 73 x-rays. Staff from Island Hospital's Diagnostic Imaging department are in the clinic one day per week to capture training opportunities with clinic staff. We continue to explore the ability to provide scheduled x-ray services to outside providers, and we intend to communicate next steps in the coming weeks.

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We always place your emotional and medical needs first and foremost.*

Provider Recruitment Update / Timeline

Together with the Orcas Island Health Care District, we continue our search for permanent providers. We are currently in conversations with three physician candidates and one advanced practice clinician/physician assistant candidate with onsite interviews already scheduled. It is imperative that we are thorough in our process to ensure the right clinical and community fit. We are currently seeking previous experience providing quality care in a rural community to include chronic disease management, injury and acute illness management, and wellness services in both adult and pediatric patients. We are also looking for providers that have an appreciation for living on a remote, rural island and embrace the opportunity to partner with EMS and other healthcare stakeholders.

Kudos to Dr. Frank James, Island Primary Care – Orcas Medical Director

Dr. James was recently recognized by the Washington Academy of Family Physicians for his efforts in keeping San Juan County residents safe throughout the pandemic. San Juan County is the only county in the State of Washington without a single death related to COVID-19. Thank you, Dr. James, for your lifesaving efforts!

Accessing Our Services

[Phone Access](#)

We hear the frustration with our call wait times and continue to work diligently to improve our phone access. The work we are doing to address this issue includes creation of a new department, the Access Center, to add resources and focus on performance improvement opportunities that will directly impact the patient experience. Updates that have been made recently include the following:

1. We have redesigned our call tree to create an Orcas-specific option. You will find this as option #3 on the phone menu.
2. We continue to hire and train additional staff in the Access Center to better meet the call volumes.

The Access Center team is the best source to schedule appointments. Feedback can be provided via the "Contact Us" form on the Orcas Clinic page of the Island Hospital website. Our leadership team reviews submissions and follows up with appropriate parties to resolve concerns.

[Daily, Same-day Appointments \(Triage during business hours\)](#)

Daily, same-day appointments are available for patients who are triaged and determined they need to be seen. For these types of appointments, our Access Center connects the patient to a nurse at the Clinic who provides triage and direction to the appropriate level of

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care. To be triaged or to schedule an appointment, call: [360-293-3101](tel:360-293-3101) or [360-376-2561](tel:360-376-2561) (local).

After-hours Care Coordination

- Island Primary Care – Orcas has developed an effective and successful collaboration with our EMS partners. Staff and EMS have worked together to care for patients brought to the clinic by EMS as well as patients that need higher level or off-island care.

How it works:

- Patients needing after-hours care call [360-293-3101](tel:360-293-3101) or [360-376-2561](tel:360-376-2561) (local) and are connected with the answering service who contacts the Island Hospital physician on call. This physician calls the patient and determines the level of care needed. This could be medical advice provided over the phone, advice for the patient to call 9-1-1, or arrangements for in-person care. If a patient requires in-person care, the Island Hospital physician calls the Orcas on-call provider. Together, they assess the patient condition and meet the patient at the clinic.

Medication Refill Requirements

- State and Federal requirements necessitate that a patient be established with one of our providers to allow us to prescribe medications. We welcome patients to the Clinic who need medication refills; however, patients must first be assessed by a provider. We kindly request patients anticipate their refill needs ahead of time to accommodate an appointment. To set up an appointment for a medication refill, please call [360-293-3101](tel:360-293-3101) or [360-376-2561](tel:360-376-2561) (local).

Comments and Feedback

- For questions, comments or feedback, please use the communication feature on the Orcas Clinic webpage to share your thoughts. Island Hospital and Clinic staff collaborate and strive to address concerns and provide a response within 24 hours, Monday thru Friday.
<https://www.islandhospital.org/orcas/>

- **A message on kindness:**

In order for our staff to properly care for our Orcas community, we ask that you kindly consider caring for us. As healthcare professionals, we are on the frontlines committed to providing care in a friendly, considerate manner. We ask for the same in return from our patients and the community. When you are kind to us both in-person and on social media, you help inspire us to provide great care. Thank you.

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