

**Community Health Needs Assessment Report  
Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 2  
DBA: Island Hospital  
Anacortes, Washington**

**Published December 18, 2019**



**Introduction**

Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 2 (DBA: Island Hospital) is the center for health and wellness in western Skagit County. Since 1962, our award-winning hospital has focused on providing the community with the latest in technological advances and medical innovations. With over 190 physicians and healthcare providers, we are proud to offer a wide range of comprehensive services that are sure to fit your needs.

Island Hospital is a public hospital district, comprising boundaries include Fidalgo, Cypress, Guemes and Sinclair Islands. We have five publicly elected Commissioners, who govern our hospital district to ensure best practices are fairly enforced, monitor facility upgrades and see to the enhancement of community services offered to residents of our district. Island Hospital employs more than 750 staff members and has five family care clinics, as well as six specialty clinics. We are designated as a Level III trauma facility with a Level II stroke center. We have 43 patient beds, including six intensive-care, six labor and delivery, and 31 medical/surgical beds.

*Our Promise*

Your best health care experience begins at Island Hospital. We always place your emotional and medical needs first and foremost.

*Our Mission*

We will deliver quality, compassionate and personalized health care to the communities we serve.

### *Our Vision*

Through collaboration with our physicians, staff and community we will develop innovative programs and provide medical services that enhance patient experiences and outcomes.

Our history began in 1958, when Skagit Public Hospital District No. 2 was founded. The first patients were admitted to Island Hospital in 1962. The hospital underwent significant expansion and/or renovations in 1990 (Emergency Department), 1996 (surgery, birth center and health resource center), 1998 (Medical Office Building), 2008 (renovation and expansion), 2009 (Sleep Wellness Center) and 2012 (Medical Arts Pavilion housing Cancer Care, Physical Therapy and Wound Care).

### *Services*

Island Hospital offers a full range of comprehensive medical services and support programs for your health care needs. Our medical staff is highly trained and specialized to provide the highest quality of care to our patients. In addition, as a commitment to the total well-being of each patient, Island Hospital offers a number of support programs to complement the medical services provided. Our Medical Services:

- Birth Center
- Cancer Care Center
  - Chemotherapy
  - Blood Product Transfusion
  - Non-Chemotherapy Medication
  - Personalized Genome Therapy
- Cardiac Rehabilitation for the following procedures:
  - Bypass Surgery
  - Valve Replacement/Repair
  - Angioplasty or Stent Procedures
  - Heart Transplant
- Diabetes Education
- Diagnostic Imaging
  - X-rays, MRIs, PET & Ultrasound
  - Interventional Radiology
  - Mammography
  - Nuclear Medicine
- Emergency Services
- Family Medicine
- Gynecology
- Headache Clinic
- Internal Medicine
- Laboratory
- Neurological Rehabilitation
- Obstetrics
- Occupational Therapy
- Pediatrics
- Physical Therapy
- Psychiatry & Behavioral Health
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Respiratory Care
- Sleep Wellness Center
- Speech Therapy
- Sports & Spine
  - Interventional Spine Procedures
  - Ultrasound-Guided Diagnoses
  - Electro-Diagnostic Testing
  - Nerve-Root Blocks
  - Facet Medical Branch Rhizotomy
- Surgery (Inpatient & Outpatient)
- Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine

### *Honors*

Our goal at Island Hospital is to achieve the highest possible quality of care and continue to improve our patient, staff and physician satisfaction. Island Hospital will always work toward our highest levels of performance quality and safety. Island Hospital has won a number of awards

over the years for our high-quality of service and patient satisfaction. The following are some of our highlights in recent years:

- In 2019, Island Hospital received a four-star rating by Medicare based on patient’s survey.
- Island Hospital was No. 1 in Washington State for lowest readmission rates in 2015.
- According to an Article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer (PI)<sup>1</sup>, Island Hospital ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in Washington State for earning high scores for quality from Medicare patients who received care in 2015. In the survey, 78% of Island Hospital’s patients scored their care as a 9 or 10.
- Island Hospital’s Psychiatry & Behavioral Health program received national honors as one of ten programs to be awarded \$10,000 by Jackson Healthcare for impacting underserved communities.
- The Psychiatry & Behavioral Health program was recognized for community impact and innovation by Intalere (formerly Amerinet).

Island Hospital is proud to be an accredited DNV hospital.

#### *Other Facilities*

Island Hospital is the primary facility of Skagit County Public Hospital District No. 2, a government-owned Public Hospital District. Island Hospital operates five family care clinics and six specialty clinics offering a wide range of services to the communities we serve.

#### Family Care Clinics:

- Anacortes Family Medicine
- Center for Maternal and Infant Care
- Fidalgo Medical Associates
- Teen Clinic
- The Walk-In Clinic

#### Specialty Clinics:

- Headache Clinic
- Island Surgeons
- Psychiatry & Behavioral Health
- Sleep Wellness Center
- Sports & Spine
- Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine

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<sup>1</sup> “How Patients Rank Washington’s Hospitals”, Seattle Post-Intelligencer (PI), August 23, 201



### *Community Health Needs Assessment*

Island Hospital is pleased to submit this Community Health Needs Assessment. We do so both as a matter of compliance with Section 501(r)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as mandated in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and as an obligation to those we serve. As an organization, we have taken this change in law as an opportunity to improve our community service and continuously focus on meeting the changing health care needs of our community.

Consistent with the requirements of Section 501(r)(3), the Community Health Needs Assessment Report is organized as follows:

- Our Community
- Review of Previous Community Health Needs Assessments
- Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology
- Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs
- Conclusion
- Appendix - Community Health Resources

## Our Community



Island Hospital is located in the city of Anacortes in Skagit County, Washington. However, we have historically defined our “community” as a broader area, including west Skagit County, north Whidbey Island and the San Juan Islands. Based on inpatient and outpatient usage in recent years, our primary service area includes the following zip codes:

- 98221
- 98232
- 98233
- 98239
- 98245
- 98250
- 98257
- 98261
- 98273
- 98277
- 98279
- 98280

Approximately 90.1% of our outpatient usage and 86.1% of our inpatient usage is from individuals living within this primary service area. The remaining usage is from individuals living in the broader community as well as individuals vacationing near Anacortes. Throughout this document, all references to our community refer to these twelve zip codes.



One special aspect of our community is its location on Puget Sound. The San Juan Islands lie within a rain shadow cast by the nearby Cascade Mountains on the Olympic Peninsula. The result is that the islands receive approximately half of the annual rainfall of Seattle, which is only 80 miles south, and experience about 250 sunny days per year. Because of this, our coastal region and islands are a popular vacation destination and retirement area. In addition to the beautiful weather, the islands are relatively undeveloped and sparsely populated. The islands are primarily accessible by boat, although travel by plane or helicopter is also possible. For those who travel by ferry, the primary access location is Anacortes. The islands and coast are a sharp contrast to the inland community, including the relatively large city of Mount Vernon, whose economy is largely based on manufacturing and agriculture.

For demographic information, Skagit and San Juan Counties are a close approximation of our community. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted the nation's most recent census and published that data by state, county and city. Similarly the Population Health Institute collects and reports health data and demographic data by county on an annual basis.

### Demographic Comparison of Washington State, Skagit County and San Juan County

	Wash. State 2015	Wash. State 2018	Skagit County 2015	Skagit County 2018	San Juan County 2015	San Juan County 2018
Population	7,170,351	7,535,591	121,846	128,206	16,252	17,128
Age < 18	22.5%	22.1%	22.3%	21.8%	13.8%	13.0%
Age 65+	14.4%	15.4%	19.3%	20.7%	30.6%	34.1%
Female	50.0%	50.0%	50.4%	50.4%	51.6%	51.6%
Caucasian	80.3%	78.9%	90.7%	90.3%	94.3%	93.9%
African American	4.1%	4.3%	1.0%	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%
American Indian	1.9%	1.9%	2.8%	2.7%	0.9%	1.0%
Asian	8.4%	9.3%	2.3%	2.4%	1.5%	1.5%
Hispanic	12.4%	12.9%	17.9%	18.7%	6.1%	6.7%
Rural	16.0%	16.0%	29.0%	29.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Per Capita Income	\$31,233	\$34,869	\$27,598	\$30,069	\$38,556	\$40,784
Uninsured Adults	19.5%	9.0%	22.8%	12.0%	24.7%	11.0%
Children in Poverty	18.6%	14%	21.5%	16%	18.1%	15%
Unemployment Rate	7.0%	4.8%	8.3%	5.5%	5.9%	3.9%

San Juan County comprises the four largest of the San Juan Islands as well as many other smaller islands. As previously indicated, part of the islands' unique nature is their low population density and underdeveloped environment. Skagit County includes Anacortes on the western edge and extends approximately 95 miles inland into the Cascade Mountains. While Skagit County has a much larger population than San Juan County, approximately half of that population lives in and around Mount Vernon, on the edge of our community. Because Skagit County Hospital District No. 1 (DBA: Skagit Valley Hospital) is based in Mount Vernon, many of the individuals in that area tend to utilize Skagit Valley Hospital as their primary health care resource.

The residents of San Juan and Skagit Counties have very different economic situations. Per capita income in Skagit County (\$30,069 in 2018) is consistently below the state average (\$34,869 in 2018), while it is drastically higher than the state average in San Juan County (\$40,784 in 2018). The income gap between Skagit County and the state worsened between 2015 and 2018. Skagit County's per capita income was 11.6% below the state average in 2015 while it was 13.8% below the state average in 2018. However, the income gap between the two counties slightly improved in the same period, from a 28.4% difference in 2015 to a 26.3% difference in 2018, although the size of the difference further emphasizes the economic difference between the counties. Additionally, Skagit County had a higher unemployment rate (5.5%) than the state (4.8%) in 2018 while San Juan County has a below-average unemployment rate (3.9%), although all of those rates decreased significantly between 2015 and 2018. Finally, Skagit County has higher rates of uninsured adults and children in poverty, although both counties and the state saw significant improvements in these rates between 2015 and 2018.

### Change in Age Distributions

	Percentage Under Age 18			Percentage Age 65+		
	2015	2018	Change	2015	2018	Change
Washington State	22.5%	22.1%	-1.81%	14.4%	15.4%	6.49%
Skagit County	22.3%	21.8%	-2.29%	19.3%	20.7%	6.76%
San Juan County	13.8%	13.0%	-6.15%	30.6%	34.1%	10.26%

Compared to Washington State, Skagit County has approximately the same percentage of youth while San Juan County has a significantly lower percentage of youth. Additionally, while both counties have higher percentages of elderly adults than the state, the rate in San County (34.1% in 2018) was significantly higher than in Skagit County (20.7% in 2018). All three geographic areas experienced the same trend between 2015 – a decrease in the percentage of youth and an increase in the percentage of elderly adults – although both trends were more drastic in San Juan County. San Juan County’s more extreme figures are likely due to the county’s popularity as a retirement area as well as its extremely rural nature that limits social, cultural and educational opportunities for youth.

Both counties have less cultural diversity than Washington State, although diversity remained relatively similar for both counties between 2015 and 2018. Both counties have below-average rates for most ethnicities – Hispanics in Skagit County being the major exception, since that is higher than the state average – with less cultural diversity in San Juan County than in Skagit County. Between 2015 and 2018, the percentage of Caucasians decreased in each county with the percentages of most other races slightly increasing.

The Native American population in Skagit County is comprised primarily of three tribes—Samish, Swinomish and Upper Skagit—although the Upper Skagit Tribe is generally outside of our community. While the Swinomish and Upper Skagit Tribes each have a reservation that provides a geographic center for their communities, the Samish do not yet have a reservation and the related central population base. Samish covers the health needs of their membership across a ten-county service delivery area with an outreach model from Indian Health Service Purchased and Referred Care. Samish tribal members seek care through their own health providers with preauthorization from the Tribe and receive relevant health information via newsletters, health fairs, and other strategies to promote health and prevent chronic diseases.

Information about the tribes in our community is available online:

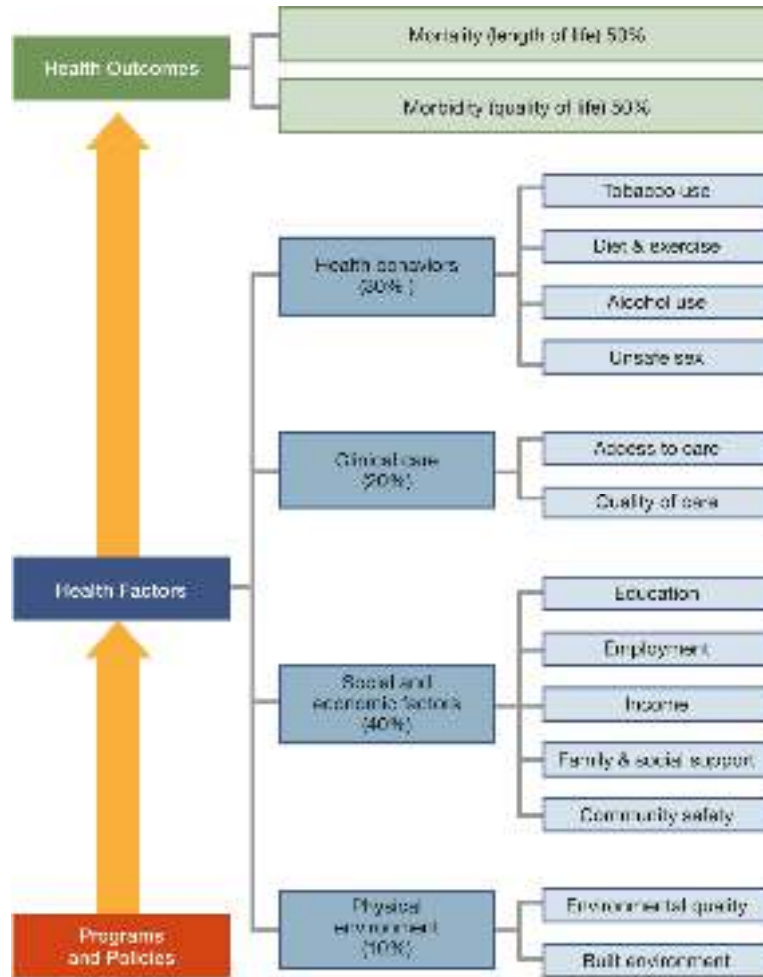
Samish Indian Nation: [www.samishtribe.nsn.us](http://www.samishtribe.nsn.us)

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community: [www.swinomish-nsn.gov](http://www.swinomish-nsn.gov)

The Hispanic population in our community tends to focus around Mount Vernon. This is likely related to the higher prevalence of agricultural work in that area as well. However, there is also a small Hispanic community on the San Juan Islands. The Hispanic community is comprised of both legal and illegal immigrants. The community also includes many individuals who speak fluent English and many individuals who speak little to no English. As indicated above, Skagit Valley Hospital tends to be the primary health care resource for the Hispanic individuals in that area.



The Population Health Institute (“PHI”) publishes annual health data for every county in the United States. The data is aggregated into health outcomes and health factors. The PHI separates health outcomes into mortality (length of life) and morbidity (quality of life). Health factors are separated into four factors that largely influence the health outcomes: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economics, and physical environment.



### County Health Rankings

	Skagit County		San Juan County	
	2016	2019	2016	2019
Health Behaviors	17	18	1	2
Clinical Care	16	16	4	9
Social & Economic Factors	22	22	11	1
Physical Environment	39	25	33	9
<b>Overall Health Factors</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Mortality (length of life)	19	19	5	4
Morbidity (quality of life)	10	13	1	1
<b>Overall Health Outcomes</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

In 2016, San Juan County's health factors ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and Skagit County's ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 39 counties in Washington. In the same year, San Juan County's health outcomes ranked 1<sup>st</sup> while Skagit County's health outcomes ranked 13<sup>th</sup>. Between 2016 and 2019, San Juan County's health factor ranking increased from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state and Skagit County's health factor ranking remained the same at the 23<sup>rd</sup>. In the same period, San Juan County's health outcome ranking remained the same on 1<sup>st</sup> place and Skagit County's health outcome ranking worsened from 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>.

The extremely positive rankings for San Juan County reflect the local culture of a natural, outdoor lifestyle and generally healthy eating. The islands are well known for this environment, so they attract individuals with a similar mindset. Because health factors tend to lead to health outcomes, San Juan County's positive health factors today are likely to lead to positive future health outcomes.

Skagit County's rankings remained relatively similar between 2016 and 2019. Compared to the islands, our inland residents are currently suffering from unhealthy historic behaviors, and environmental factors. Skagit County's lower ranking in health factors indicates that those community members are likely to continue this pattern in the future unless we can make significant changes in their health factors.

## **Review of Previous Community Health Needs Assessments**

Island Hospital conducted community health needs assessments in 2013 and 2016 and published the related reports in December 2013 and 2016, respectively. In those assessments, the following needs were identified:

### **2013 Assessment**

- Behavioral Health
- Access to Health Care
- Obesity

### **2016 Assessment**

- Behavioral Health
- Access to Health Care
- Chronic Diseases

A copy of the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment Report is available on Island Hospital's website at <https://www.islandhospital.org/publicdocuments>.

In May 2017 the Implementation Strategy was published for the 2016 Assessment. Since then, Island Hospital has initiated the following programs/initiatives as an opportunity to improve our community services and continuously focus on meeting the changing health care needs of our community.

### **Behavioral Health**

- Placed mental health counselors in Anacortes High School and Middle School to serve the students by providing confidential and free mental health services.
- Began Behavioral Health Integration Program, BHIP, which is the integration of mental health into the Family Practice Clinics.

- Recruited second Psychiatrist to the established practice which expanded access to specialty care and chronic care providers.
- Gathered data and evaluated needs related to behavioral health patients in the Emergency Department, leading to a grant request for a 7 day per week presence of a Medical Social Worker (MSW) in the ED. This grant through the IH Foundation was awarded for 5 years beginning in 2020, supporting this critical program for our community into the future.

### **Access to Health Care**

- Realigned primary care providers by practice specialty to improve access, improve workflows and enhance the patient experience.
- Developed a dedicated call center to address high volume call clinics improving scheduling services and customer satisfaction.
- Recruited eighteen (18) new providers, both physicians and advance practice clinicians to Island Hospital Primary Care Clinics & Specialty Care Clinics in order to improve access and expand the provider offerings to meet the individual needs of our community members.
  - Family Practice-7 providers
  - General Surgeons-2 providers
  - Pediatrician-1 provider
  - OB/GYN-1 provider
  - Sleep Wellness-1 provider
  - Wound Care-1 provider
  - Interventional Pain-1 provider
  - Headache Medicine- 2 providers
  - Psychiatry-2 providers
- Assisted with recruitment efforts of three (3) new providers to our community.
  - Island Eye Surgeons
  - Island Internal Medicine
  - Island Family Physicians
- Refined and expanded the use of technology through the use of the Electronic Medical Record and the Patient Portal to support ease of access to medical information, care planning and appointments for the healthcare team and our patients.

### **Chronic Disease**

- Established a Diabetes Education Program.
- Recruited a new Registered Dietician and expanded services.
- Improved Dietary options at hospital to encourage healthier eating for patients, staff and guests. Including the use of “Genuine Skagit” produce.
- Began a Summer Farmstand with local farms selling fresh produce.

- Established an Employee Wellness Program which focuses on healthy lifestyles, exercise and healthy eating.
- Utilization of a nurse navigator in Primary Care to connect with “at risk” patients regarding chronic disease management.
- Partnered with insurance companies on various initiatives to encourage patients to seek out preventative care options available to them at Island Hospital.

### **Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology**

Island Hospital’s executives led the planning, conduct and reporting of the community health needs assessment. We contracted with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA), one of the nation’s top 10 certified public accounting and consulting firms, to assist with the community health needs assessment.

We began by identifying our community based on inpatient and outpatient services by zip code. We then gathered both quantitative and qualitative data about the health needs of our community. Qualitative data was collected through one-on-one interviews. Quantitative data included national, state and county health studies and our own records. All data was collected between August and October 2019.

#### *Interviews*

In August 2019, we gathered qualitative information and perspectives on community health needs through one-on-one interviews with key community stakeholders. The primary goal of these interviews was to ascertain a range of perspectives on the community’s health needs. We gathered information from the following specified groups within our community:

- People with special knowledge or expertise in public health
- Government health departments and other government agencies
- Representatives of medically underserved populations
- Representatives of low-income populations
- Representatives of minority populations

The following agencies and organizations participated in Island Hospital’s community health needs assessment by contributing their time, perspectives, opinions and observations. We thank them for their past and continued assistance.

- Island Hospital
- SeaMar
- Anacortes Police Department
- Skagit County Public Health Department
- Skagit County Sheriff Department
- Samish Indian Nation Health Department
- San Juan County Health & Community Services Department

We believe these organizations qualify as representative of our community's minority, low-income and medically underserved populations because the nature of their work brings them into contact with those groups on a regular basis.

### *Quantitative Data*

The community health needs assessment included consideration and analysis of the following publicly available data.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Chronic Disease Overview
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>
- Population Health Institute's County Health Rankings
  - <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/washington/2016/overview>
- Skagit County 2016 Community Health Assessment Summary Report
  - <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PHTAC/Reportsmain.htm>
- United States Census Bureau QuickFacts
  - <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/53055,53057,53>
- Washington State Department of Health's Medically Underserved Areas & Medically Underserved Populations
  - [ftp://ftp.doh.wa.gov/geodata/layers/maps/mua\\_p.pdf](ftp://ftp.doh.wa.gov/geodata/layers/maps/mua_p.pdf)
- Washington State Department of Health's San Juan and Skagit County Chronic Disease Profiles
  - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/Documents/Pubs/345-271-ChronicDiseaseProfileSkagit.pdf>
- Washington State Department of Health's Risk and Protection Profile for Substance Abuse Prevention in San Juan County
  - <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/data/research/research-4.47-sanjuan.pdf>
- Washington State Department of Health's Risk and Protection Profile for Substance Abuse Prevention in Skagit County
  - [http://adai.uw.edu/wastate/RDA/skagit\\_rda.pdf](http://adai.uw.edu/wastate/RDA/skagit_rda.pdf)
- Washington State Department of Transportation Ferry Passenger and Vehicle Fares
  - <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/pdf/CurrentFares.pdf>
- Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, San Juan and Skagit Counties
  - <http://www.askhys.net/Home/Press>

### *Information Gaps*

Although we are unable to identify any specific information gaps, we recognize members of the community representing different organizations, groups, etc., have differing opinions concerning community health needs and priorities and may have provided different input.

### *Analytical Methods Applied*

We applied various analytical methods to the available data. During interviews, we asked participants to identify community health needs, prioritize those health needs, and identify possible solutions to those health needs. We analyzed the historic prevalence of various health issues in our community and compared those with county, state and national averages. Finally, we reviewed previously identified health priorities as identified by national, state and county health organizations.

### *Request for Feedback*

Island Hospital was willing to consider written comments related to its last Community Health Needs Assessment Report, but received no such input. If any reader would like to provide input on this community health needs assessment, they can submit their comment(s), in writing, to the following address:

Attention: Executive Assistant to the CEO  
RE: Community Health Needs Assessment  
1211 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Anacortes, WA 98221

### *Determination of Significance*

While many needs were identified during the community health needs assessment process, this report focuses on those needs that were deemed *significant* by Island Hospital. A health need's significance was evaluated based on many factors. The factor given the most weight was the relative importance placed on the health need by the community participants. Other factors included the number of people in our community impacted by the health need, the impact of that health need on quality of life and length of life, and the impact on low-income, minority, and other medically underserved populations. The decision was made by Island Hospital's executives, who were involved throughout the community health needs assessment process.

### *Process and Criteria for Prioritizing Identified Health Needs*

Island Hospital's executives determined our prioritization based on the consistency of indications by participants and its agreement with historic quantitative data, our mission, and preventative impact.

## **Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs**

Based on our interviews and small group meetings, as well as reviews of hospital, county, state and national health data, we identified the following significant community health needs, listed in order of priority:

- Behavioral Health
- Access to Health Care

### *Behavioral Health*

Behavioral health is a term that encompasses mental health and substance abuse, both of which are significant issues in our community. Regarding mental health, community participants expressed concern regarding the rise in depression incidences and suicide and the increasing demand for mental health care to match the rise in incidences. See "Access to Health Care" below for a discussion of access to behavioral health care.

Mental health was consistently identified as a top priority by community participants. In 2015, San Juan County's average per capita mentally unhealthy days were slightly better than the

Washington State average while Skagit County’s average was slightly worse. Between 2015 and 2018, mentally unhealthy days increased in Washington State and San Juan County and decreased slightly in Skagit County, so that all three areas are much more similar.

**Change in Mentally Unhealthy Days per Month**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Change</b>
Washington State	3.3	3.8	0.5
Skagit County	3.9	3.8	-0.1
San Juan County	2.7	3.6	0.9

The mental health disparity between Skagit and San Juan Counties has many causes and factors, but some of the difference can be attributable to economic stress. As discussed previously in the “Our Community” section, in both 2015 and 2018, Skagit County’s unemployment rates and percentage of children in poverty were both above the state averages. Alternatively, while San Juan County’s unemployment rate was below the state average in both 2015 and 2018, the percentage of San Juan County children in poverty continued to decrease from above the state average in 2015 to below the state average in 2018. The culture of the San Juan Islands encourages and somewhat necessitates a healthy lifestyle and routine. It may be that individuals with better mental and physical health tend to move to San Juan County while individuals with worse health issues tend to leave the area.

**Change in Unemployment Rate**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Change</b>
Washington State	7.0%	4.8%	-45.8%
Skagit County	8.3%	5.5%	-50.9%
San Juan County	5.9%	3.9%	-51.3%

**Change in Children in Poverty**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Change</b>
Washington State	18.6%	14.0%	-32.9%
Skagit County	21.5%	16.0%	-34.4%
San Juan County	18.1%	15.0%	-20.7%

In the last decade, worsening mental health conditions have been partially attributed to economic struggles of our community members. However, our community has seen significant improvements in its unemployment rates and the percentage of children living in poverty in recent years, while mental health has continued to be significant concern. Some possible explanations for this discrepancy are (a) that people are employed, but at a job that doesn’t pay as well as they need, (b) that people are working multiple lower-paying jobs, which increases stress on other areas of life, or (c) that they aren’t part of the official unemployment measure because they have given up hope and stopped searching for a job. Each of these possibilities were indicated by at least one community participant, with the idea of working multiple lower-paying jobs as the most common explanation for increasing stress and decreasing mental health in our community.

As adults work more jobs or longer hours, they have less time for relationships, exercise, rest and relaxation, each of which is important in achieving positive mental health. Alternatively, those

adults that would like to earn more money but can't find a means to that end face additional stress brought on by the lack of financial resources. Parents in these situations may unintentionally increase the stress level in their homes, negatively impacting the mental health of their spouse and/or children. Finally, there's a significant correlation between mental health and substance abuse, causing a spiraling decay in mental and physical health as each impacts the other (i.e. worsening mental health leads to increased substance abuse and/or increased substance abuse leads to worsening mental health).

Community participants expressed specific concern for the mental health of youth in our community. In the 2018 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, children in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 were asked a variety of questions regarding their health behaviors. The following discussion focuses on 10<sup>th</sup> graders as an example of the other grades, which were all similar. Approximately 35% of San Juan County 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 38% of Skagit County 10<sup>th</sup> graders felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities. Those rates are a significant improvement for San Juan County, from 45% in 2015, and a slight worsening for Skagit County, from 36% in 2015.

#### **Mental Health in Community 10<sup>th</sup> Graders**

	<b>San Juan County</b>	<b>Skagit County</b>
High Anxiety	42%	32%
Sad or Hopeless	35%	38%
Experienced Bullying	31%	21%
Seriously Considered Suicide	16%	22%

San Juan County 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported experiencing worse anxiety and bullying in 2018 than Skagit County 10<sup>th</sup> graders, although Skagit County's 10<sup>th</sup> graders had a higher rate of seriously considering suicide. Regardless of any specific comparisons, the high rates of negative mental health conditions – all between 15% and 45% - in our community indicate a significant need for a lot of children.

Substance abuse covers a broad range of health issues, including tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs and illicit drugs, as well as vaping and e-cigarettes as relatively new developments. Significant substance abuse in our community includes opiates (i.e., heroin, codeine, fentanyl, etc.), methamphetamine (“meth”), prescription drugs, vaping/e-cigarettes, and alcohol. Community participants indicated that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are constant concerns among the adult population, but conversations tended to focus on more acute problems.

Community participants overwhelmingly identified opiates as the most significant substance abuse issue in our community, although for various reasons. First, participants were worried about the increase in crime – particularly burglary and theft – that comes with drug use. Second, home-made imitations of drugs like codeine and fentanyl may contain dangerous levels of drugs and other ingredients compared to legitimately produced medications from pharmaceutical companies. For example, a home fentanyl producer may not be as careful about the exact quantity of each ingredient, leading some pills to be relatively weak and others to be dangerously strong, which can lead to accidental overdoses.



Community members expressed concern regarding the use of marijuana and vaping among the youth. In its 2017 Community Health Assessment, Skagit County identified 10 priority areas to improve health and wellness for its residents. Skagit County identified marijuana use and vaping a common issue among the youth. The Population Health Trust reported 18% and 30% of marijuana use among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2018, compared to the state average of 18% and 26% among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, respectively. Skagit County 12<sup>th</sup> graders have a higher use of marijuana than at state level, while 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the County use marijuana at the same rate as at the state level.

**Percentage of Youth Using Marijuana**

	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Washington State	18%	26%
Skagit County	18%	30%
San Juan County	N/A	N/A

**Percentage of Youth Vaping**

	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Washington State	21%	N/A
Skagit County	18%	N/A
San Juan County	N/A	N/A

As for the use of vaping, 18% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Skagit County reported vaping in 2018, compared to 21% at the state level. Although the Skagit County vaping rate was slightly better than the state level, it will still approximately one in five 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Additionally, community participants indicated that they expected to see a large increase in youth vaping between that study in 2018 and today. In the summer of 2019, national reports began to appear about the dangers of vaping and e-cigarette use. The overall condition has been labeled “e-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury, or EVALI. When discussing the negative consequences of vaping and e-cigarettes, medical professionals and the county health departments generally indicated that we know their use is dangerous, but that they are so new to our country that the full extent of the negative impacts may not be known for years or decades. Recent research indicates that a youth who vapes is four times more likely to begin using traditional tobacco products such as cigarettes and chewing tobacco.

Community participants indicated concern about a rise in meth use, although this was secondary to the issues discussed above.

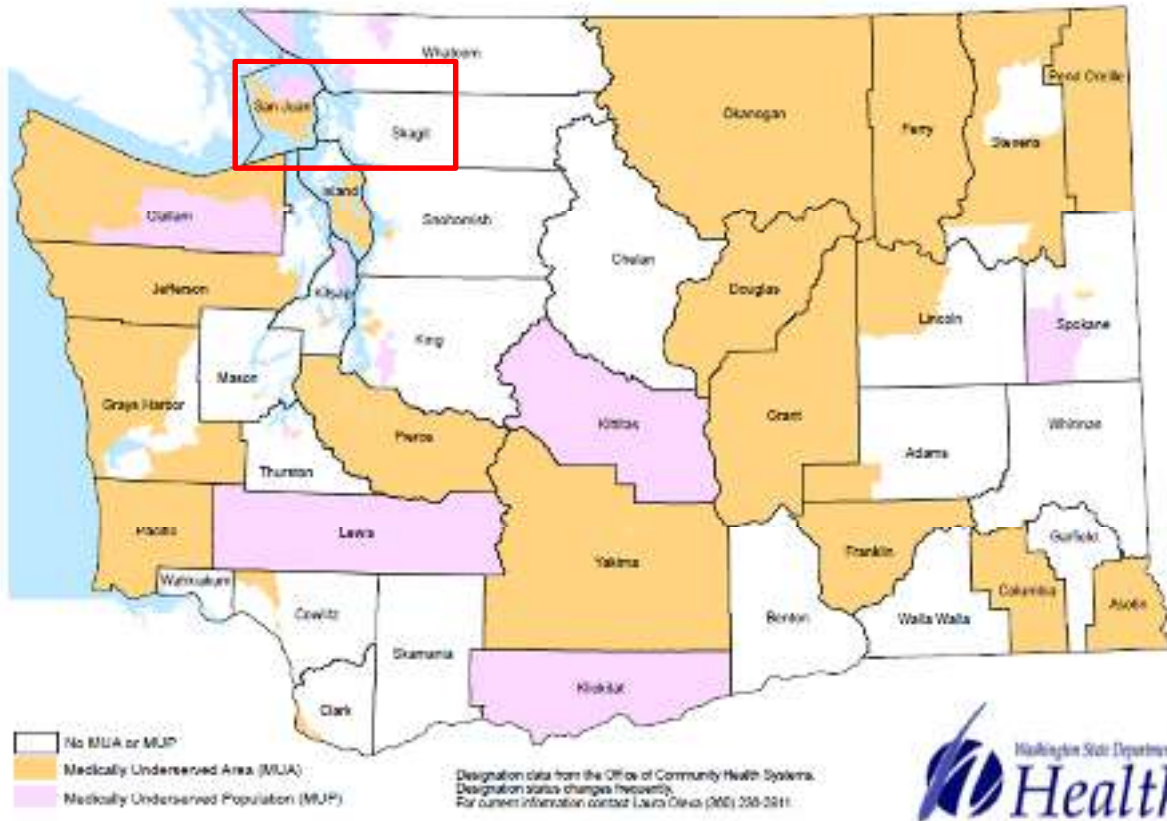
*Access to Health Care*

Our community members consistently indicated high satisfaction with access to healthcare in our community. In general, participants are happy with the number of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and similar medical facilities in our area, as well as with the variety of specialists and services. However, a few significant exceptions currently exist that pose challenges for our community members.

With the exception of the San Juan Islands, our community is not designated as either a Medically Underserved Area or a Medically Underserved Population. However, the ratio of primary care

providers to community members has deteriorated slightly in recent years. In 2015, Skagit County had 1,056 residents per primary care physician and San Juan County had 1,056 residents per primary care physician. In 2019, Skagit County increased to 1,280 residents and San Juan County increased to 1,260 residents per primary care physician. This change was reflected in community members' concern that our area needs more primary care providers.

Medically Underserved Area & Medically Underserved  
May 29, 2019



According to the Population Health Institute, Skagit County's ratio of mental health providers (Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Clinical Social Worker, Psychiatric Nurse, Marriage & Family Therapist, or Licensed Professional Counselor) was 386 people per provider in 2015 and San Juan County's average was 283 people per provider. Each geographic area improved between 2015 and 2018, with Skagit County improving to 290 people per provider and San Juan County improving to 260 people per provider.

Despite the increase in mental health providers, community members expressed a need for specific behavioral health services and a general insufficiency of mental health facilities. A rising issue noted at the Skagit County Jail is the increasing number of inmates who suffer from mental health. In a perfect world, an inmate who is a danger to themselves and to the community would be transferred to an appropriate healthcare facility or be treated by appropriate personnel in a special jail facility. However, due to a lack of mental health beds at state facilities, these individuals are frequently put in isolation at the jail, without the full appropriate health care that they need, which only worsens their mental health issue.

Community members frequently discussed the insufficiency of inpatient mental health centers available to the community. Government-owned facilities and similar charitable groups do provide mental health services to the public at little to no cost, but these facilities are almost constantly full and may have longer-than-appropriate wait lists just because of the great demand across the state. Skagit Valley Public Hospital District #1, DBA: Skagit Valley Hospital, provides inpatient psychiatric services, which is an invaluable resource to community members. However, although Skagit Valley Hospital is in close proximity, the psychiatric inpatient beds are often full, which may require an individual to wait for access or to travel to a more distant facility. Additionally, that facility does not have specialty services for adolescents or the elderly. An additional problem with more distant facilities is the transportation to/from the facility for the struggling individual, as well as the difficulty family and friends face in trying to visit and support that individual. Private facilities may have availability, but their cost is frequently prohibitive for lower-income individuals.

Based on these, community members expressed a need for additional inpatient and outpatient beds for acute mental health and substance abuse problems. In addition, community members indicated a need for local post-acute treatment options, specifically:

- Clinical access that offers counseling and similar services 24-hours-a-day to either help people avoid acute problems or deal with the long-term aftermath of acute problems.
- Short-term (less than one year) congregate or assistive housing for people to recover from substance abuse and mental health problems.
- Local acute-care opportunities for children, adolescents and geriatrics.

For individuals living on the San Juan Islands, accessing health care is a significant concern. The access problems are primarily caused by the transportation limitations inherent to living on an island with no bridges to the mainland. Although helicopter and plane travel are possible for the wealthy, the primary method of transportation to and from the islands is by boat, with only one public transportation system available through the Washington State Department of Transportation. Ferries arrive at and leave Anacortes approximately once per hour with travel taking anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours, each way. Limitations on the number of vehicles necessitate arriving at least 30 minutes early if you wish to bring a vehicle. The limited number of trips combined with the length of the ride each way means a single medical appointment frequently requires an entire day of travel; participants indicated that the fastest possible would be approximately half a day. For individuals with frequent medical appointments, such as physical therapy and radiology, the travel can be extremely stressful, demanding and possibly prohibitive.

In addition to the time requirements, the cost of travel can also be prohibitive for individuals living on the islands. A round-trip ticket from the islands to the mainland is \$7.00 for youth and seniors and \$14.00 for adults. For vehicles, a round-trip ticket ranges from \$18.40 to \$51.10, depending on the island and the size of the vehicle. For low-income individuals, the monetary cost of frequent trips can be extremely stressful and prohibitive. Each island has a local organization that can transport individuals by plane or private boat for emergencies and other limited medical situations. However, these organizations are not able to fill the demand for medical travel of San Juan County residents.

## **Conclusion**

Island Hospital reached out to community participants in 2019 to identify those health needs that are viewed as most significant and highest priority by our community members. The health needs identified by participants were behavioral health, access to health care, and chronic diseases.

We are committed to improving the health of our community, both in the short-term and in the distant future. We are developing an Implementation Strategy that responds to these health needs. We hope that our efforts, combined with those of government agencies, other nonprofits and local organizations, will lead to a healthier and happier community.

## Appendix – Community Health Resources

Island Hospital serves individuals in both Skagit and San Juan Counties. The Skagit County Public Health Department and San Juan County Department of Health and Community Services support our community members in numerous ways, including community health, mental health, substance abuse, violence prevention, child welfare, elderly services, veteran services and financial support. Each department can and should be used by residents as a primary resource when determining available services in their area. For a complete list of their activities, we recommend visiting their offices or websites:

### Skagit County Public Health Department

- 700 South Second, Room 301, Mount Vernon
- [www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/Health](http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/Health)

### San Juan County Department of Health and Community Services

- 145 Rhone Street, Friday Harbor
- [www.sanjuanco.com/378/Health-Community-Services](http://www.sanjuanco.com/378/Health-Community-Services)

In addition to governmental support, the following health care facilities and related organizations are currently available within our community.

### *Hospitals*

Island Hospital, located at 1211 24<sup>th</sup> Street in Anacortes is one of several hospitals in our community.

- Skagit Valley Hospital – 1415 East Kincaid Street, Mt. Vernon
- PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center – 1117 Spring Street, Friday Harbor
- Whidbey General Hospital – 101 North Main Street, Coupeville
- Naval Hospital Oak Harbor – 3475 North Saratoga Street, Oak Harbor

### *Clinics*

- Anacortes Family Medicine – 2601 M Avenue, Suite B, Anacortes
- Anacortes Health Care – 1220 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Anacortes
- Cascade Medical Group – 1019 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite B, Anacortes
- Fidalgo Medical Associates – 1213 24<sup>th</sup> Street, #100, Anacortes
- Fidalgo Island Walk-In Clinic – 1500 Commercial Avenue, Anacortes
- Skagit Regional Clinic – Anacortes – 2511 M Avenue, Suite D, Anacortes
- Inter-Island Medical Center – 550 Spring Street, Friday Harbor
- Planned Parenthood – Friday Harbor Health Center – 470 Reed Street, Suite 2A, Friday Harbor
- San Juan Healthcare – 689 Airport Center, Suite B, Friday Harbor
- Dr. Robert Williams – 470 Spring Street, #200, Friday Harbor
- North Whidbey Community Clinic – 1300 Goldie Road, Oak Harbor
- Whidbey Health Primary Care – 275 SE Cabot Drive, b101, Oak Harbor
- Whidbey Medical Clinic – 231 SE Pioneer Way, #209, Oak Harbor

- Dr. Sarah Lyle, MD – 429 Madrona Street, Eastsound
- Orcas Family Health Center – 1286 Mt. Baker Road, Eastsound
- Orcas Island Family Medicine – 33 Ulmer Street, Suite 5, Eastsound
- Orcas Medical Center – 7 Deye Lane, Eastsound
- Lopez Island Medical Clinic – 103 Washburn Place, Lopez Village
- Mount Vernon Women’s Clinic – 111 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon
- North Cascade Family Physicians – 2116 East Section Street, Mt. Vernon
- North Cascade Women’s Clinic – 125 North 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite A, Mt. Vernon
- Planned Parenthood – Mt. Vernon Health Center – 1805 East Division Street, Mt. Vernon
- Quick Care Medical Clinic – 205 Stewart Road, #104, Mt. Vernon
- QTC Medical Group – Suite 103, 205 I-5, Mt. Vernon
- Sea Mar Community Health Center – 1400 North Laventure Road, Mt. Vernon
- Sea Mar Mt. Vernon Healthcare for Homeless – 1010 East College Way, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Family Health Clinic – 916 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Regional Clinic – 819 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Regional Clinics – Mount Vernon – 1400 East Kincaid Street, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Regional Clinics – Riverbend – 2320 Freeway Drive, Mt. Vernon
- PeaceHealth Medical Group – 835 East Fairhaven Avenue, Burlington

Our community also includes numerous specialty clinics serving various needs.

### *Behavioral Health*

While the county health departments and many of the hospitals and clinics identified above provide mental health services and treatment for substance abuse, the following facilities are also available in our community:

- Inside Passage Counseling – 902 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Anacortes
- Sea Mar Anacortes Behavioral Health – 1004 M Avenue, Anacortes
- Dr. Christopher Tobey – 606 Commercial Avenue, #G, Anacortes
- Compass Health – 520 Spring Street, Friday Harbor
- McGuire Shahn – 55 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North, #204, Friday Harbor
- The Clearing – 2687 West Valley Road, Friday Harbor
- Island Assessment & Counseling – 520 East Whidbey Avenue, Suite 205, Oak Harbor
- Greg Rolnick – 840 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #204, Oak Harbor
- Sea Mar Oak Harbor Behavioral Health Center – 31640 WA-20, #1, Oak Harbor
- Tri-Essence Care – 1121 SE Dock Street, Oak Harbor
- Bodymind Counseling – 229 Indralaya Road, Eastsound
- Brandon Adams, MS, LMFT – 188 A Street, Eastsound
- Ian Healing Arts Center – 453 North Beach Road, Eastsound
- Island Psychiatric Services – 374 North Beach Road, #D4, Eastsound
- Malcolm River – 11 Discovery Way, Eastsound
- Bitterroot Assessment and Counseling – 1310 East College Way, Mt. Vernon
- Bywater Psychiatric Consultation – 721 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon
- Catholic Community Services – 320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon

- Compass Health – 1100 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon
- Dion Menser, LMFT – 1315 Cleveland Avenue, Mt. Vernon
- North Sound Behavioral Health – 301 Valley Mall Way, #110, Mt. Vernon
- Phoenix Recovery Services – 1601 East College Way, #1, Mt. Vernon
- Sea Mar Mount Vernon Behavioral Health Center – 1010 East College Way, Mt. Vernon
- Shifa Health – 1103 Cleveland Avenue, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Behavioral Health – 406 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, #30008, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Recovery Center – 1905 Continental Place, Mt. Vernon
- Skagit Valley Reach Center – 1413 East College Way, Mt. Vernon
- Sunrise Community Mental Health – 2500 East College Way, Mt. Vernon
- Catholic Community Services – 614 Peterson Road, #200, Burlington
- Follman Agency – 910 South Anacortes Street, Burlington