

Dear Editor,

My 17-year-old son recently needed stitches for a knee wound he got while cutting firewood for a friend. Not a bad wound but too severe for band-aides (12 stitches in the end).

I called Peace Health ahead of time to let them know we were coming. Nice gal said she'd get the paper work going. We got there and evidently the paper work was started but they needed another 20 minutes to enter all the details. Often repetitive questions.

Once finished with my son's paperwork they realized he was not 18 so they repeated the whole process with me. (You'd think a Social Security # would be adequate to access a database shared by care providers and insurance companies??).

Then we got another half hour to sit in the otherwise empty waiting area. So about an hour after arriving we got into the ER and the Doctor did a quick and efficient job with the stitches...less than 45 minutes in the ER.

Cha-ching, the bill for 12 stitches at Peace Health is \$1280.78.

We moved to our farm on San Juan Island 14 years ago and have been somewhat regular customers at the former Medical Center, a more humble facility where we never paid much more than \$100 for the Doctor's time.

The new Peace Health facility is impressive for sure. As I waited for my son's turn in the ER I walked around the facility, gazing at fancy wood work and locally sourced decor. Cool stuff. But at the same time I had this sinking feeling, 'Who's paying for all of this?'. Well I guess I am, an insured self-employed guy who's high deductible won't cover a dime towards my son's stitches.

My wife called Peace Health to talk about the high bill. When she explained we could not afford the bill the Peace Health representative suggested we sell "...vehicles, livestock, or other assets..."

So while many are thinking this new hospital is great for our island Please remember that Peace Health is merely another example of a broken health care system.

And if you are sick and tired of the sluggish economy and a tight pocket book, before you start your chainsaw remember that Peace Health charges over \$100 per suture.

**Jay Ibold**