

As a member of the community and Chief Administrator Officer for Peace Island Medical Center, I've been hearing much about our new critical access hospital since it opened in November. While most of it is complimentary, there have been a few Letter to the Editor complaints.

Overall, it has been encouraging to hear from so many that the new Center is working well for them, and that they appreciate the beautiful, healing environment.

For that, they may thank the generosity of private donors and the San Juan Island Community Foundation, which covered the cost of much of the art and landscape features.

Certainly the facility is being well-used, especially the Emergency Department (ED). In just the first six weeks, more than 375 patients came into the ED.

Of those, 41 required urgent transfer for a higher level of care. However, even more – 47 – were for the first time able to stay on-island for care and avoid both the travel cost and higher expense of off-island ED service, as mainland hospitals charge two to three times more than Peace Island for emergency care.

Emergency treatment is one example of more comprehensive care now available with Peace Island Medical Center. In addition to maintaining all health services previously provided by InterIsland Medical Center, we continue to add more.

For instance, cancer care is now available and diagnostic colonoscopies will be available on-island starting in March.

We are recruiting for an additional family medicine physician for the clinic and, in time, will be able to offer general surgery plus other medical and surgical specialties.

With growth and change can come growing pains. I am mindful of that, and will continue to respond to questions as they emerge.

For service, billing or other questions please don't hesitate to contact me (378-1703) or Beth Williams-Gieger (378-1705). We welcome the opportunity to hear your concerns and respond.

In service,

Jim Barnhart
Chief Administrative Officer
PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center