



Orcas Island Health Care District Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The District promotes the health of the Orcas community by funding island appropriate facilities, services and staff and acts as a catalyst to bring all health care stakeholders together to support a community approach to care that addresses health care needs on the island.

Preamble to the Strategic Plan

The Orcas Island Health Care District (the District) exists to protect and improve the health of the Orcas community by assuring the availability of quality primary, acute and after-hours medical care for the Orcas community in a financially sustainable and cost-effective manner. While the District is not a direct provider of services, our vision is to be a model rural health care community that facilitates access to the tools needed for islanders to achieve maximum health and wellness. Implementation of the strategic plan, the first, since our 2018 creation, will move us closer to that vision. It also defines how we will leverage our tax revenues and our partnerships, especially with the Island Health Primary Care-Orcas Clinic (the Clinic) to increase service levels and access.

Despite the recent turnover and limited supply of primary care providers, the District has many assets on which to build; our community being number one. The community is keenly interested in and encouraging of all efforts to increase access and reduce unnecessary travel off island. They provided a strong voice during the planning process for this Plan.

The goals, detailed below, provide direction to begin to forge our vision into reality. The District commits to measuring our efforts rigorously, sharing information transparently, continuing dialogue with the community to share opportunities and challenges that these assessments reveal, and using that information to continue to advance closer to our vision. Our strategic goals and action items assume that we will accomplish our goals using existing and potential new contractual relationships and agreements. Specifically, the District will deploy its tax revenues to support, subsidize and assure primary care and other island-appropriate, essential care for the Orcas community, to promote:

- *Access to quality primary care, including pediatrics, women’s health, behavioral health, and care coordination for complex patients.*
- *A positive primary care experience for everyone who seeks care on Orcas.*
- *Reducing the need to travel off island for health care; and*
- *Partnerships and technology that facilitate local access to health care.*

This Strategic Plan represents the culmination of collection, analysis and consideration of data demonstrating current health utilization patterns of District residents and demand for primary care providers. As part of this process, the District also undertook a robust community engagement process, which identified community insights and priorities. Specifically, the engagement process included a community survey that 20% of all households participated in; it also included a series of listening sessions and 1:1 interviews with specific community groups, including seniors and caregivers, families with children under the age of 17 and households where a language other than English is spoken at home. The community survey was distributed in both English and Spanish, and a listening session was conducted with a translator present.

The District will laser focus its funding and annual budget and use the various sub-Committees already in place with the Clinic and with other Island organizations to influence the quality of local medical services, as well as access and equity. We will accomplish this by financially supporting the following goals, and by measuring change:

GOAL 1: Quality Primary Care is Available on Orcas Island

Objective 1.1. The Clinic has sufficient staff to provide quality care in a timely manner.

Action 1.1.1: Contribute to the full- time provider hiring bonuses to enable the Clinic to attract high quality providers.

Action 1.1.2: Use the Joint Quality Committee, comprised of the District and the Clinic to establish metrics to measure staffing and -quality and regularly review progress.

Action 1.1.3. Work with the Orcas high school counselors to make graduating seniors aware of the Clinic’s “train while you work” program to become a Medical Assistant.

Action 1.1.4. Encourage and support the Clinic in providing medical rotations and internships.

Action 1.1.5 Explore options for housing Clinic staff and visiting providers such as ADUs that islanders are willing to make available on attractive terms.

Action 1.1.6. Meet periodically with Clinic staff to ensure that they feel heard and valued by the District

Objective 1.2. The Clinic has the equipment it needs to provide quality primary care.

Action 1.2.1: Purchase equipment needed to provide quality care using District or donated funds.

Action 1.2.2. Create an equipment aging inventory and replace equipment when appropriate.

Objective 1.3. The Clinic building and furnishings facilitate the provision of quality primary care

Action 1.3.1. Conduct capital needs assessment to create a schedule for regular maintenance of the building structure and systems.

Action 1.3.2. Establish an agreement for maintenance and repairs with a qualified party.

Action 1.3.3. Contribute to building improvements needed to enable better care for patients.

GOAL 2. The Clinic and OIFR/EMS Coordinate to Provide Quality, 24/7 After Hours Support

Objective 2.1. Coordination between OIFR and the Clinic functions smoothly

Action 2.1.1 Support the Clinic and OIFR in developing and maintaining written guidelines for coordinating care.

Action 2.1.2 Use the existing Joint OIFR and District Committee to establish metrics to measure quality and regularly review progress .

Action 2.1.3: Work with the Clinic and OIFR to establish, maintain and continually improve clear, shared communication between the Clinic and OIFR

Action 2.1.4. Develop material about how to access a -provider 24/7. Regularly and widely distribute.

Objective 2.2 Clinic and OIFR shared patient care is seamless

Action 2.2.1 Help create a shared understanding of “seamless care” for the Clinic and OIFR.

Action 2.2.2 Work with Clinic and OIFR to identify steps and processes that can enable seamless care.

GOAL 3. Islanders have access to and feel welcomed at the Clinic

Objective 3.1 Telephone access to the Clinic is patient-friendly, Orcas-specific and effective.

Action 3.1.1 Provide a subsidy to support answering phones locally, scheduling appointments, -referring calls to the triage nurse

Action 3.1.2. Work with the Clinic to ensure that position is filled by someone who has a warm and friendly phone manner.

Objective 3.2 After visit follow up is timely and effective

Action 3.2.1 Work with Clinic to improve protocols for processing referrals and prescription orders.

Action 3.2.2 Provide a subsidy to facilitate “warm hand offs” for referrals.

Objective 3.3 Language is not a barrier for Spanish speaking families

Action 3.3.1 Support the Clinic in acquiring, in partnership with community agencies, the technology or workforce to create a roster of bilingual individuals who can be called on for assistance when needed.

Action 3.3.2 Work with the Clinic and community partners to create a Community -Health Worker program that includes bilingual members who can assist patients in preparing for visits, during the actual visits and with post-visit matters.

Objective 3.4 Patients with disabilities are able to access the clinic

Action 3.4.1 Fund the replacement of older exam tables with ADA approved exam tables.

Action 3.4.2 Work with Clinic and community partners to create a Community Health Worker program that can assist people with physical, cognitive or memory issues to reach the Clinic for appointments and to understand their aftercare treatment plan.

Action 3.4.3 Work with the Clinic to create and sustain a home -visit program for patients who have physical difficulty in accessing the Clinic

Objective 3.5 Lack of insurance is not a barrier to receiving care at the Clinic

Action 3.5.1 Establish a fund to support uncompensated care for those that are unable to qualify for the Clinic's financial assistance program or obtain insurance.

Action 3.5.2 Assure that registration packets for the Clinic's financial assistance program are readily available to patients in English and Spanish

Action 3.5.3 Facilitate the Clinic's coordination with OCRC and SHIBA to help patients apply for Apple Health or Medicare assistance.

Action 3.5.4 Facilitate greater coordination between the Clinic and OCRC to serve patients who receive healthcare assistance from OCRC.

Action 3.5.5. Explore with the Clinic the feasibility of implementing and communicating about a sliding fee structure.

Objective 3.6 Front desk and Clinical staff are welcoming

Action 3.6.1 Ensure that the Clinic trains all front office staff to acknowledge entering patients quickly and welcome them warmly

Action 3.6.2: Provide financial support for cultural competency and cultural awareness training.

GOAL 4: Reduce Unnecessary Off-Island Travel for Health Care

Objective 4.1 Patients have telehealth visits with specialists

Action 4.1.1 Fund conversion of one provider office to a telehealth visit equipped room.

Action 4.1.2 Work with Clinic to initiate cardiology and mental health telehealth services initially.

Action 4.1.3 Encourage Clinic to expand telehealth services more broadly.

Action 4.1.4 Publicly communicate the District's role in enabling telehealth visits.

Objective 4.2 The Clinic provides an expanded range of point of care testing

Action 4.2.1. Work with the Clinic to identify appropriate point of care tests

Action 4.2.2. Fund acquisition of necessary test equipment and materials.

Action 4.2.3. Work with Clinic to secure additional lab technician capacity.

Action 4.2.4. Work with Clinic to increase lab capacity by cross-training other clinical support staff on lab procedures and equipment.

Objective 4.3. The Clinic has a robust visiting specialist program

Action 4.3.1 Work with Clinic to establish a visiting cardiologist arrangement

Action 4.3.2 Use visiting cardiologist as a model for other visiting specialists

Objective 4.4. Unnecessary air evacuations are reduced

Action 4.4.1 Work with OIFR and the Clinic to create a protocol for handling cases where it isn't clear that air evacuation is required.

Objective 4.5. Children with Apple Health get basic dental care on the island

Action 4.5.1. Work with Clinic to include nurse administered fluoride treatment as part of pediatric examinations with appropriate consents.

Action 4.5.2. Explore feasibility of funding creation of a dental clinic for preventative care for children with Apple Health.

Action 4.5.3. Explore feasibility of providing funding for dental van to increase the number of visits to the island.

GOAL 5. Establish and Support Health Related Collaborations and Partnerships that Improve the Health and Wellness of Islanders

Objective 5.1 Facilitate Aging in Place on Orcas

Action 5.1.1 Convene community groups to address unmet needs and form a consortium focused on addressing the barriers to aging in place on Orcas

Action 5.1.2 Work with providers and other agencies that support and provide services to the elderly to coordinate care for shared patients.

Objective 5.2 People with chronic disease or serious illness have access to support groups that can help them manage their health.

Action 5.2.1 Work with providers and community partners to foster support and education groups.

Action 5.2.2. Explore whether funding would enable the groups to reach more islanders or improve health outcomes for group participants.

GOAL 6. The District has excellent communication with Islanders

Objective 6.1 The District regularly publishes relevant District and Orcas healthcare news

Action 6.1.1 Short, informative articles are regularly published in the Sounder, OIHCD website and the Orcasonian.

Objective 6.2. The District leads in educating and informing Islanders in how to access after-hours and emergency care.

Action 6.2.1. Purchase and distribute a small item that can be attached to keys, purses or backpacks with the after-hours phone number information in English and Spanish.

Action 6.2.2. Add a paragraph about accessing after hours care to all of District advertisements, news releases and emails to its mailing list.

Action 6.2.3. Create and provide colorful, easy to understand information in English and Spanish on accessing after hours care to the Orcas schools, library, and childcare facilities to distribute to students or their parents,

Objective 6.3 The District has a robust social media presence

Action 6.3.1. Retain consulting support to develop a strategy related to a social media presence, which includes our Spanish speaking residents.

Objective 6.4 The District regularly communicates to District residents regarding the actions it has taken regarding each goal and objective in the strategic plan; including:

Action 6.4.1. Regularly communicate the public the actions the District takes to support staffing at the Clinic.

Action 6.4.2 . Develop material about how to access a provider 24/7. Regularly and widely distribute.

Action 6.4.3 . Publicly communicate District's role in establishing Pediatric fluoride treatment program.

Action 6.4.4. Publicly communicate District's role in aiding aging in place

Action 6.4.5. Publicly communicate the District's role in creating and funding the telephone access position

Action 6.4.6. Publicly communicate the District's role in helping improve after visit care.

Action 6.4.7. Publicly communicate the District's role in reducing unnecessary air evacuations

Objective 6.5 The District quarterly newsletter is widely read.

Action 6. 5.1 Retain a graphic artist to create a layout design.

Action 6.5.2 Board committees provide at least one article each year on their activities and projects.

Action 6.5.3 Secure agreements to make newsletter available at local community gathering spots.