



Health Matters

Health and Wellness Information for Our Community



Clinic Hours

Lopez Island Medical Clinic is located in Lopez Village at 103 Washburn Place.

Clinic hours:
Monday–Friday,
8:30 am– 5:00 pm

To schedule an appointment, call 468-2245 during regular hours.

Medical emergency?
Dial 911.

www.lopezisland-medical.org/

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The Affordable Care Act:

Changing Lives on Lopez

It was just 2 years ago that Jerry Schible felt a sharp pain, started sweating and hyperventilating and thought he might be having a heart attack. He called 911.

Dispatch was on the line when Jerry passed out.

When Jerry came to, he heard the responder radio Lopez EMTs for help. “The EMTs arrived, took my vitals and put me on the stretcher. They said I was going into a coma. They wanted to fly me off. My wife and I had just bought airlift insurance. We couldn’t really afford it, but we had it.”

The weather was so bad that night that no flights could get in or out. Unable to airlift their patient off, the EMTs stabilized Jerry, administered a painkiller and gave him instructions to take the first available ferry to the mainland.

In the Island Hospital emergency room the next morning, Jerry was given an MRI and blood tests. “The Doc came in after a half hour or so and told me I was Type II diabetic. He said I had high cholesterol and they were surprised I was still breathing. My blood pressure was 165 over 110.” After spending half a day in the hospital, Jerry was released.



Nurse Practitioner Cathy Doherty with Lopez “miracle man” Jerry Schible.

But he headed back to Lopez with a new problem: like millions of Americans, Jerry had no health-care insurance.

“The charity services covered my hospital bill, we were very fortunate,” he says, “but the doctor said the meds to manage my diabetes would cost \$80 to \$100 per month. I told my wife Tammy, we would just have to do without certain things. It actually affected our grocery bill.”

Before the couple moved to Lopez from Las Vegas in 2003, Jerry was a long-distance truck driver

and his company paid for mandatory physicals. When he learned he had diabetes he was working as a chef on Lopez and couldn’t afford medical insurance. “Any time I had aches or pains, I lived with it. Like a problem I had with my toe a few years ago. I saw a doctor on the mainland. He said both the big toes were affected and if I had \$1000 per toe he could fix me up. I said it cost me \$150 just for the exam and I could hardly afford that, let alone \$1000 per toe. So I didn’t go back.”

All that changed when the Affordable Care Act went into effect last year.

“I went to the Lopez Resource Center. They helped me log on, apply for coverage and did

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Affordable Care Act on Lopez

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an excellent job helping with the application. Tessa and Stephanie were great. I got covered, and my wife Tammy did, too.”

As soon as he had insurance, Jerry made an appointment with nurse practitioner Cathy Doherty at the clinic. “I went in for a well-being physical which is where they check vitals, do blood work, that kind of thing.” Insurance covered the appointment. “Then Cathy told me to go to the pharmacy to have my prescription filled.”

He remembers the day well.

“I saw Marge and handed her my insurance card. She handed me my meds. I said: ‘How much do I owe you?’ She said it was covered 100% under the new insurance and could I please sign the receipt? I gladly signed!”

Jerry says that having health insurance has changed his life.

“Basically, I wouldn’t go to the doctor because I couldn’t afford it. Then I found out I was diabetic. I was wondering how I’d deal with that when the Affordable Care Act got started. It’s helped me tremendously. Now I take the money I was spending on meds and use it at Aaron’s gym in the village. In the last 24 months I’ve lost 110 pounds! Me being Hawaiian, we like luaus and love to eat, also being a former chef. I went from size 40 to size 36! I wish I had a picture to show you what I looked like when I was chunky,” he laughs. His new health regimen: eat more vegetables and fruit, less red meat, more fish and exercise five days a week.

Cathy Doherty says Jerry’s success has affected the clinic staff. “Jerry is like a miracle person. He changed his life. He’s a survivor. He’s a great example, a real inspiration for us. He’ll inspire other people, too. This is a very powerful story.”

According to Cathy, The Affordable Care Act has had a big impact on Lopez. “Last winter we started seeing many more people at the clinic – people who hadn’t come in in the past. People are proud, responsible. They like to pay their bills. People without insurance hadn’t come in if they couldn’t afford it. Generally speaking, good coverage had already been in place for children. It’s mainly adults who are benefiting from the new plan.”



Many on Lopez now have medical insurance thanks to The Affordable Care Act. Enrollment is open now.

“People can be proactive now, there are more preventative care opportunities than ever before,” Cathy says. “Jerry is a perfect example. People no longer have to rely on crisis management. They can come in for follow up, that’s what all of us here at the clinic like the most. Please let readers know if they don’t already have insurance, that the Open

Enrollment is happening now through February 15, 2015. We hope everyone who needs coverage will sign up. They can call The Family Resource Center, 468-4117, for more information.”

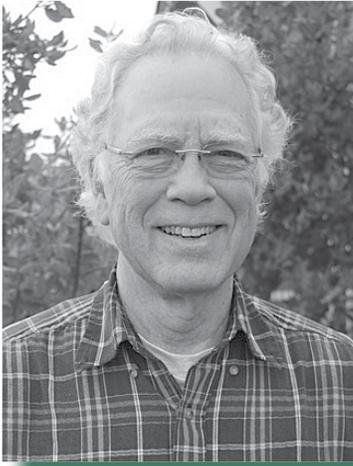
Final comments from Jerry, who’s cousin Don Ho taught him to play the ukulele when he was 7 years old: “I’m working as a musician now, playing rhythm and lead guitar for Lopez group Runs Deep. Like I said, I just want my story to inspire people, to let them know if I can do it, they can, too! I still love sugar, but now I make one candy bar last a whole week. I’ve embraced it! I want other people with Type II diabetes to know they can lose weight and get healthy, too.”



Stay Well This Flu Season

Getting your flu shot is the best way to avoid the flu this winter. The ideal time to be vaccinated is by the end of this month, although December or January are not too late. A new flu shot is needed every winter because viruses change year to year. The Flu vaccine is available now at the Lopez Island Medical Clinic, Lopez Island Pharmacy and through the San Juan County public health office. Please call ahead for an appointment.

Need Help With Your Medicare Insurance Questions?



Mac Langford, Lopez
Island's SHIBA volunteer
extraordinaire

more than 20 years. As a volunteer for the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program, Mac provides free, unbiased, confidential assistance on Medicare and other healthcare choices.

"When it comes to insurance, there are complexities which can befuddle people; my job is to un-fuddle," Mac says with a broad smile. Over the years he's helped about 500 people sort out their healthcare questions.

SHIBA, a free consumer service provided by the Insurance Commissioner's office, provides up-to-date information on: private insurance, public health care programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Basic Health, prescription drug programs, long-term care options, benefits and rights, health policy comparisons, fraud/abuse.

The SHIBA title carries the word Advisors, but volunteers are actually prohibited from giving advice. "I give information but people come to their own decisions and I have nothing to sell," says Mac. "I usually spend about an hour with folks. If there are problems, I don't give up!"

People who are going on Medicare are his main clients. "Sometimes I hear from people after their 65 birthday and they wish they'd seen me when they were starting Medicare."

Where does he meet with people? The Lopez library or the clinic conference room are the usual places. All information is kept confidential. Mac sometimes helps people by phone, too. He is available year round, unless he's traveling.

John Bogert, who lives on Shaw Island, gave Mac a call last winter. "I'd done a lot of research prior to talking with Mac but found the various websites dense and hard to navigate," he says. "Mac was very clear, concise and knowledgeable and helped me choose a product that was a good fit. That one conversation saved me hours of time."

If you get an Excedrin Headache just thinking about comparing Medicare insurance plans, you're not alone. Most folks rate navigating the healthcare maze right up there with dealing with the IRS or having a root canal.

Lucky for Lopez, we've got Mac Langford.

Mac has been volunteering to help people understand their healthcare coverage options and rights for

Mac expects the rest of 2014 to be busy due to the current open enrollment for people with Medicare Advantage (Part C) and Part D, the Medicare drug program. Basically that means, if you want to change from one plan to another in January 2015, now is the time to do your research. Open Enrollment period ends Dec. 7th. "One of the reasons this is an especially busy season is that Group Health is dropping all their current Medicare Advantage plans (Part C). People are calling about their options."

Mac encourages everyone to revisit their current Part D drug plan during open enrollment. Why? "Drug companies can change their plans every year – the premiums they charge, the drugs they cover, the co-pay amount and the deductible. Basically, it's worth the effort because there may be a better plan out there. People can call me at 468-4015"

How did Mac become a volunteer? He and his wife Tytti moved to the island permanently in 1993. Tytti, the new manager of Lopez Clinic, heard about the SHIBA program at work and came home announcing, "I've got something for you to do!"

It was a good match for Mac who, a former schoolteacher, still gets a kick out of helping people. "Today I saw someone who will save nearly \$900 a year by switching plans," he says, obviously delighted.

I caution him that after folks read this story, he can expect even more calls. "Great!" he replies. "That's what I'm here for!"

Volunteers Needed

Twenty-one years in the saddle aren't daunting Mac, but he says it would be great to have more SHIBA volunteers on Lopez. If you're looking for important, interesting, stimulating volunteer work, SHIBA could be for you.

What exactly is SHIBA?

SHIBA is a group of caring, committed, well-trained volunteers who help people navigate the healthcare system.

Any special qualifications needed?

The most important: desire to help others.

Is training provided?

Absolutely. SHIBA has a comprehensive training program for new volunteers through Island Hospital, including on-line training and group classes in Anacortes. Volunteers are not on their own until they've been mentored. There are actually two levels of support: the local volunteer group plus SHIBA's professional staff in Seattle.

How do you become a volunteer?

Contact Mac. Phone number: 468-4015.

Benefits of becoming a SHIBA volunteer?

Mac: "That's easy. It feels great to be of service to your community, to help your friends and neighbors. I recommend it to anyone!"

Health Matters

Catherine Washburn Medical Association
P.O. Box 309 • Lopez, WA 98261



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Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
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****ECRWSS****
Postal Customer

Forgot to mail your CWMA membership? Do it today!



Support For Lopez Clinic

Annual CWMA membership (\$25 family household / \$15 individual)	\$ _____
<i>Your additional gift will make a big difference</i>	
MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUND <i>Upkeep of the clinic building and grounds</i>	\$ _____
SIKSTROM FUND <i>Assist those who are unable to afford medical care</i>	\$ _____
EQUIPMENT FUND & WISH LIST <i>Purchase state-of-the-art medical equipment for Lopez Clinic</i> <i>List item you would like to purchase _____</i>	\$ _____
RESERVE FUND <i>Available for capital improvements or emergency needs</i>	\$ _____
ENDOWMENT FUND <i>Provide perpetual income for funding major capital improvements</i>	\$ _____
Total tax deductible donation <i>(credit card payment or checks to CWMA; no cash please)</i>	\$ _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip code _____

Visa Mastercard# _____ Exp. date _____ Billing zip code _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Please mail to CWMA • P.O. Box 309 • Lopez Island, WA 98261