

The Catherine Washburn Medical Association (CWMA) is asking for your signature on a petition to put a measure on the April 25, 2017 ballot that would create a Public Hospital District for Lopez Island.

***This is not a vote for or against a district,
it will simply allow the issue to be put on the April ballot.***

Why now? Our clinic has done very well for over 20 years without requiring tax support from the community.

The partnership search has clearly indicated that the long-term financial stability of our clinic will rest in the hands of our community, as well as our future partner. Healthcare in general is facing significant changes and unknowns. Depending on the partner we select, our reimbursements (revenue) could be significantly reduced. Regardless of the partner we choose, transition and operating costs will increase. To insure long-term security for the clinic, the CWMA Board has decided to pursue the creation of a Public Hospital District. This district would be run by an elected board of commissioners that will represent our community by making decisions about how to use tax dollars that support medical care on Lopez.

Why not wait until the August or November elections?

The April time frame is short, however success in April would benefit the clinic in two important ways:

1. Petition signatures and support of the measure would demonstrate our community's commitment to the clinic's long-term operation to potential partners.
2. Tax collection could begin supporting the clinic in 2018. Putting the item on an August or November ballot would delay tax collections into 2019. Funds needed between the establishment of a new partnership and the 2019 collection period would have to be secured from another source.

How much will I have to pay?

Each potential partner creates a different scenario so a firm number cannot be determined until an agreement is reached. A partner that continues our present model – a Rural Healthcare Clinic and affiliation with a 50-bed hospital – could retain our current reimbursement structure and require a rate of \$.35/\$1,000 of assessed value. For a San Juan County 2014 median house value of \$392,000, that would be about \$137/year. A partnership that lowered reimbursement revenues could result in a rate of \$.50/\$1,000 assessed value or approximately \$196/year for a home valued at \$392,000. The final decision on the rate will be determined by the elected board of the Public Hospital District based on the budget they submit to the county in the fall. The maximum rate allowed is \$.75/\$1,000 assessed value, or \$294/year for a home valued at \$392,000.

Completed petitions must be submitted to the county on January 9, 2017. If we successfully gather the required 220+ signatures, there will be many opportunities for our community to get more information and to ask questions before the election in April.

The Catherine Washburn Medical Association board continues its work to secure a partner for the clinic. As the process progresses, they will continue to address questions about potential partners as well as the proposed Public Hospital District.