

HEALTH MATTERS 2.0

Lopez Island health-related news from CWMA, Lopez Island Hospital District, Lopez Island Fire & EMS (LIFE), and UW Medicine

April 2021

THANK
YOU!

For the first issue of 2021, we want to recognize the incredible support from so many who have kept the Lopez community safe throughout the pandemic. This article is a very big THANK YOU to everyone involved in fighting COVID-19. If 2020 was the year of COVID testing, 2021 is defined as the year of the vaccine.

As the vaccine effort began to roll out, the community was asked to maintain our collective patience, decency, and flexibility. We knew demand would be greater than supply, and some would get the vaccine before others. Situations like these can bring out the best and worst in people, and it's likely no surprise that the vaccine phase brought out the BEST in Lopezians. We saw providers, first responders, and numerous volunteers come forward to help keep their friends and neighbors informed and engaged, all the while displaying empathy, grace, and compassion towards one another.

While the flow of vaccine has been slow, we are beginning to see improvements thanks to the hard work of the San Juan County Department of Health & Community Services. They continue to do an exceptional job keeping providers and the community updated about handling, delivery, and distributing the vaccines.

In addition to handling their "day jobs" - already impacted by adjusting to new responsibilities due to COVID protection - our local health care providers eagerly prepared to administer COVID vaccines. The small, but mighty, Lopez Island Pharmacy team led the way in getting through the onerous process to become a State-approved vaccine provider. Outside of County staff, the Pharmacy has administered the most vaccines of any approved provider and continue to be the gold standard.

The Lopez COVID Health Support Team, a volunteer group of primarily retired health care professionals, helped at the start of the pandemic by making and distributing face masks. As vaccines became available, they stepped up to organize and staff our own version of "mass vaccination" events in collaboration with the County and Lopez Pharmacy. Fighting a pandemic *does* take a village.

Early in the pandemic the UW Medicine Lopez Clinic quickly shifted to telehealth visits to keep people safe, and the team provided more COVID testing than any other UW Neighborhood Clinic. Although the clinic's efforts were initially hampered by limited state allocation, by mid-March the staff began administering COVID vaccines every Tuesday as part of the overall community effort.

As is always the case, Lopez Island Fire and EMS paramedics and EMTs provided logistical and monitoring support at numerous vaccine events, including February's National Guard undertaking. Many might not be aware that was almost cancelled due to severe weather that disrupted shipment of vaccine. Support came from near and far as the Washington State Ferries diverted a sailing to make sure personnel and supplies made their way to Lopez.

Finally, we thank YOU - our community. You have modeled the right behaviors as far as social distancing and mask wearing. As of the end of March, 40% of San Juan County residents have initiated a vaccine, ranking the County as #2 in the State in this important metric. Thanks to everyone for doing your part to keep your family, friends and neighbors safe.

While the pandemic has changed our way of life - perhaps forever - it has also reinforced that Lopez is a strong, resilient, and caring community. We all feel fortunate to work with, and to serve, such dedicated professionals, volunteers, friends, and neighbors.

In gratitude!

LIHD, LIFE, CWMA and UW Medicine Lopez Island Clinic

Catherine Washburn Medical Association (CWMA)

CWMA's purpose, since 1971, is to assist in whatever way possible in the erection, completion, and maintenance of medical facilities on Lopez Island. In addition to the Lopez Clinic, we now support Lopez Island Physical Therapy (LIPT) and Lopez Fire and EMS (LIFE). During the pandemic, we also supported a variety of COVID-related services for our community. We work closely with the Lopez Island Hospital District (LIHD) whose mission is to ensure high-quality, island-appropriate care.

CWMA's Annual Meeting: Will be held May 15 at 10am via Zoom. Members of record (as of when meeting notice is mailed, 30 to 50 days prior) are eligible to vote for directors and any other business brought to the meeting. To assure a quorum, ballots must be received at least 5 days before the meeting or eligible voters must attend the meeting.

Supporting and Maintaining Equipment: Our focus has been to assure power in case of outage and maintain the temperature in the medication/vaccine refrigerator to protect expensive and critical medications. To prevent overheating issues: the generator's faulty circuit board was replaced; ventilation in the refrigerator room was improved and a new AC unit installed; and electrical circuitry was upgraded to prevent overload. Ongoing monitoring and notifying systems are being established so responsible parties will know when any concern arises. CWMA also remodeled the clinic lab and purchased a new clinic LifePac AED system (a sophisticated unit for defibrillation, pacing, EKG, BP, pulse, and data reporting) and some clinic office equipment.

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COVID Support: CWMA purchased a new vaccine refrigerator for the Lopez Island Pharmacy and covered other expenses related to distributing vaccines. We also reimbursed nurses to cover malpractice insurance premiums for those who reactivated their licenses to help with vaccinating. We continue to support the Lopez COVID Health Support group which provides the Grab 'n Go masks at many island locations.

Lopez Island Physical Therapy: The last six months have been challenging as LIPT is still restricted to seeing one patient at a time due to COVID. CWMA and the LIHD are subsidizing some of LIPT's operating expenses during the pandemic.

Clinic Wish List: Replace our aging X-ray machine in the next few years.

CWMA Support for Farmers Market: Due to road construction on Village Road in front of the Farmers Market location, CWMA will allow the Market to use the corner lot across from the clinic (SW corner of Washburn Place and Village Road) until construction is completed in late June.

Support your Lopez Community and Join CWMA: Please help support our Lopez Island medical community by joining CWMA. This is our primary way to raise funds needed for the facilities and organizations providing essential medical services to our community and maintaining healthcare access on Lopez Island. We welcome annual memberships (\$30 per household) as well as larger donations, including stock or estate transactions. Information on membership and donations may be found at <https://catherinewashburnmedical.org>.

A Message from our New Fire Chief, Adam Bigby

As the new Chief of Lopez Island Fire and EMS (LIFE), it is my pleasure to continue the tradition of cooperation with the Lopez Island Hospital District and UW Medicine. The work we do together is necessary in adapting to the rapidly changing environment of emergency medicine. I am a Washington native with a 30-year career in fire and EMS, the last 20 have been as a Paramedic. I am excited to continue my career with LIFE and the wonderful partnerships that have been forged by my predecessors.

The islands have a somewhat unique model in that we rely on both career staff and volunteers. Our EMT's undergo over 200 hours of training to earn their certification and it doesn't end there. They continue their education through bi-monthly classes to maintain their credentials. The amount of dedication that we require from our volunteers rivals many full-time jobs, and it's important to recognize that many volunteers do work full-time in addition to serving the community.

I would like to highlight Amy "Table" Studzienko who has been a Firefighter/EMT with LIFE for over seven years, starting just after she moved to Lopez in 2013. Table is a dedicated volunteer, who not only treats patients and fights fires on the island but puts extra time into training as a member of our wildland firefighting team. If that were not enough, Table is a First Aid and CPR instructor and takes a leadership role in our High School Internship program. Table attributes their interest in the department to "buds" Pamela and Suzanne, and to the overall "pitch-in spirit" of our community. "As I tell the students every year, this is hands down my favorite thing ever."



Firefighter/EMT, Amy "Table" Studzienko

Lopez Island Fire and EMS is committed to serving the community and we are proud to pitch in wherever we can.

UW Medicine Brings the Doctor to You

Called a few different things — from telehealth to telemedicine to virtual care — online medical appointments give you an easier, more convenient way to see your provider or consult with a specialist.

What is a telemedicine visit?
A telemedicine visit is a video-based visit with a UW Medicine provider. You'll receive the same personalized medical care as you would in a face-to-face visit from the comfort of your own home.

What kind of visits are appropriate for telemedicine?
Telemedicine visits are available for acute illnesses and injuries, behavioral health, management of chronic conditions and medications, nutrition and diabetes, and specialty consults. Specialty consults are available in over 100 specialty areas throughout the UW Medicine Health System. Talk to your primary care provider about virtual specialty consults.

How does a telemedicine visit work?
When it's time for your appointment, you will connect with your provider through video chat. MyChart users can log in to their accounts and select the "Begin Video Visit" button. If you don't have a MyChart account, you'll be sent a link for your appointment via a text message option or email. Click on the link to start your visit. You can also sign up for a MyChart account at mychart.uwmedicine.org.

Does insurance cover telemedicine visits?
UW Medicine telemedicine visits are a covered benefit for most insurance plans and are billed similarly to in-person appointments. Double-check with your health insurer to see if it is a covered benefit.

How do I schedule a telemedicine visit?
Call 360.468.2245 during regular business hours to schedule a visit with your UW Medicine Lopez Island provider or request a specialty consult. Or log in to your MyChart account and book online 24/7. Interpreter services are available for telemedicine visits.

More information about telemedicine visits, including how to prepare for your visit, helpful tips, and security information, is available online at uwmedicine.org/virtual-care.

- Make an Appointment at the UW Medicine Lopez Island Clinic
- Book online through MyChart at uwmedicine.org/book-now
 - Call the clinic at 360.468.2245
 - Press #1 to schedule a routine visit with your provider
 - Press #2 to schedule a lab visit or if you have an urgent concern
 - Press #3 for COVID-19 information