

A message to our Patients:

When Neighborcare Health began operating the clinic on Sunrise Ridge in September 2016, we did so in fulfillment of our mission, our service commitments, and our ultimate goal of 100% health care access and zero health disparities. Although there have been previous health care providers, ours was the first Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to do so. In the nearly four years since, our staff have been honored to provide care to thousands of islanders.

These four years have also presented challenges of operational and financial sustainability that other health care providers serving the rural island community faced previously, and some challenges that are especially difficult for an FQHC. In response, islanders wisely voted to create a Public Health District to help guide and sustain critical health care access into the future.

As the Public Health District is now positioned to invite multiple health care organizations to respond to a request for proposals to be Vashon's long-term primary medical care services provider, Neighborcare Health has made the decision not to respond. This means that Neighborcare Health will ultimately transition out of the Vashon Island clinic, to be succeeded by a new health care service provider identified by the commissioners.

We have thoroughly evaluated all possible avenues to continue providing services on Vashon, and ultimately concluded that we cannot optimally meet the community's unique needs, such as urgent care, or longer visits with providers and longer hours. There is no confirmed date for the transition, but will do our utmost to coordinate with the island's commissioners and the successor provider on the timing of a transition, hoping that together we can find a timeline that is feasible for all parties and maintains continuous service.

This decision was made after lengthy consideration of our experience of the Vashon community's needs, our model of care and our overall organization and commitments. We are grateful to the community for trusting us with its care, and for its generosity through financial donations.

We are also thankful to the clinic staff, who have done outstanding work. Results of our patient satisfaction surveys show that our Vashon patients trust in their care teams and feel they receive excellent care. Our intention is to match these staff members with similar positions in other parts of our organization if they are interested. Whether these staff members work with the successor service provider will depend on the organization and those individuals.

We understand that patients and the community will have many questions about many things, such as timing, health records, prescriptions, billing, insurance, and many others. Please know that when we have more information we will communicate widely with our patients and the community. In the meantime, please review the FAQs on page two of this document.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS- May 11, 2020

Is Neighborcare Health still open and taking appointments?

Yes, the clinic on Sunrise Ridge is still open and available to serve patients for their health care needs. Please call 206-463-3671.

When are you leaving the island?

There is no confirmed date for the transition, yet. We will work closely with the Vashon Public Health District and hopefully with the successor service provider on a transition plan and timeline, hoping that together we can find a timeline that is feasible for all parties and maintains continuous service. We will communicate it widely when the date has been set for transition.

Why is Neighborcare Health leaving Vashon Island?

Over the last four years, the community has been asking for an array of medical and behavioral health services that are outside the scope of what we can and do provide as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). We have come to the realization that our model is simply not optimal for Vashon's unique needs, and another provider will likely be a better fit for the community.

Who will the next service provider be?

Our understanding is that this is not yet determined. The Public Health District commission is looking for interested providers to respond to its request for proposals and will engage with the community about needs.

Will my doctor be working for the next service provider?

That has yet to be determined and will be up to the new service provider and your doctor.

Can I continue to be a Neighborcare Health patient, after the Vashon provider transition?

You are welcome at any of our community clinics in Seattle or Olympia. The nearest is Neighborcare Health at High Point in West Seattle. As a Neighborcare patient, your records and health history are all accessible at any Neighborcare clinic.

How do I get my health records? Will they be transferred to the new provider?

To access your records now, visit neighborcare.org, go to Patient Info and Access Health Records to get information on how to obtain your health records. There are also request forms at the clinic (once we are back to normal operations). As we get closer to understanding the date of transition and the plan, we will address more questions about health records.

Will there be time between Neighborcare and the next provider, like there was between CHI and Neighborcare? We don't know yet. We will know more as we create a transition plan with the Public Health District commission.

Is the school-based health center leaving the island, too?

This decision will not impact Neighborcare's school-based program on Vashon Island, which receives funding through Best Starts for Kids. The school-based health center will continue to serve students on the island.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Vashon residents should contact their Public Health District commissioners with questions, comments, or concerns about the RFP process and future plans for health care providers. vashonhealthcare.org