PeaceHealth St. Joseph, Whatcom County Community Profile

PeaceHealth St. Joseph serves the North Sound region of Wash., with Whatcom County being its primary service area (PSA). The Bellingham-based medical center is a tertiary care hospital providing comprehensive specialty care and centers of excellence in cardiovascular, cancer, spine and joint replacements. Providers at PeaceHealth Medical Group in Bellingham and Lynden provide a full range of primary and specialty care services.

Overview

Service Area: Whatcom County, Wash. Bellingham is the largest city in the county, representing approximately 40% of the county’s population.

Facts & Figures (July 2016 to June 2017)

- Total licensed beds: 255
- Average daily census: 197
- Average length of stay: 4.57 days
- Employees: 2,665
- Active medical staff: 642
- Volunteers: 450
- Inpatient admissions: 14,999
- Outpatient clinic visits: 322,232
- Surgeries: 7,724
- Births: 2,022
- ED visits: 64,464

Major Medical Services

- Integrated Cancer Center
- Cardiovascular Center
- Joint Replacement Center
- Spine Care Center
- Haggen Family Emergency & Trauma Center
- Behavioral Health Inpatient Center
- Childbirth Center
- Robotic Surgery
- Grabow Therapy & Wellness Center

Community Benefit

July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

- Charity Care: $3,503,000
- Unpaid Cost of State Programs: $28,289,000
- Total Community Benefit: $32,976,000

History

In 1891, PeaceHealth St. Joseph was the first hospital founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and has provided care to the greater Whatcom County community for the last 126 years.

Geography & Economy

Whatcom County is bordered to its north by British Columbia, Canada and includes stunning vistas of Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades, Coast and Cascade mountain ranges, including the active volcano Mount Baker. The local economy has historically relied on coal, timber, salmon and agriculture. Today, Whatcom County produces the most raspberries of any county in the United States.
Major Health Problems/Gaps, Key Health Indicators & Strategies

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<th>Major Health Problems/Gaps*</th>
<th>Key Health Indicators^</th>
<th>Prioritized Evidence-Based Strategies</th>
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<td>Healthy, Active Living</td>
<td>• Adult alcohol use&lt;br&gt;• Teen tobacco use&lt;br&gt;• Food, beverage environments at school, in the community&lt;br&gt;• Elder isolation&lt;br&gt;• Physical inactivity</td>
<td>Major issues identified include the abuse of opiates and excessive adult drinking. The county ranks 3rd in negative effects from heroin abuse and 6th of 39 counties in negative effects from prescription drug use.</td>
<td>• Community Health Worker programs&lt;br&gt;• School-based early intervention&lt;br&gt;• School nutrition programs</td>
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<td>Child &amp; Family Wellbeing</td>
<td>• Low immunization rates&lt;br&gt;• Low graduation rates, particularly among homeless and low-income families&lt;br&gt;• Maternal smoking during pregnancy&lt;br&gt;• High cost of childcare&lt;br&gt;• Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</td>
<td>ACEs and low vaccination completion rates are major concerns for Whatcom County. These factors put Whatcom County residents at greater risk of poor health outcomes or greater risk of serious infections.</td>
<td>• Prenatal and early childhood home visiting programs&lt;br&gt;• Levy to support early childhood services&lt;br&gt;• 'Early Pathways'/home-based mental health</td>
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<td>Health Delivery Systems</td>
<td>• High rates of opiate abuse/pain management, e-cigarette use, DUI rates&lt;br&gt;• Racial/ethnic disparities in health insurance&lt;br&gt;• Unaffordable healthcare&lt;br&gt;• Lack of dental and behavioral healthcare providers</td>
<td>Data show that there are significant differences in uninsured rates by race/ethnicity, and racial/ethnic differences in the quality of preventive care received by Medicare beneficiaries. Addressing these inequities is important to the health of the community.</td>
<td>• Supported housing programs&lt;br&gt;• Expand triage/crisis stabilization&lt;br&gt;• Linking social services and medical services</td>
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<td>Equity</td>
<td>• High poverty and low educational attainment concentrated around Bellingham and certain rural areas&lt;br&gt;• Cost-burdened housing&lt;br&gt;• Underrepresentation of nonmajority persons at all levels of health and social service delivery systems&lt;br&gt;• Limited economic opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Lack of affordable child care for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed populations</td>
<td>Affordable housing is a key component of financial wellbeing and stability, and forms the basis of good health. A high percentage of cost-burdened housing in certain areas of Whatcom County imperils the wellbeing of affected households and the community as a whole.</td>
<td>• Expanded Housing First programs&lt;br&gt;• School based health centers&lt;br&gt;• Community Health Workers / patient navigators</td>
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Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Whatcom County 2016; PeaceHealth 2016 CHNA; CentraForce Health.  
^ Based on primary data from Robert Wood Johnson’s 2016 County Health Rankings and other state sources.  
* Summarized from interviews with organizations throughout the county representing public health and minority health.