

UW Medicine student residencies at PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center

Submitted by Jason Heiner, MD

This summer marks the fifth year of a unique collaborative rural emergency medicine clinical experience between PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center in Friday Harbor and the emergency medicine physician specialty residency program of the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. **Recently, PeaceHealth Peace Island welcomed Drs. Souza, Ludwig, Harmon and Lambert to their clinical rural emergency medicine experience in the San Juan Islands.**



For many years, a relative shortage of board-certified emergency physicians in rural emergency departments has been recognized. It has been estimated that as low as 25 percent of physician providers in rural emergency departments are specialty trained in emergency medicine compared to well over 75 percent of such medical providers in urban emergency departments. Workplace trends suggest that over time fewer physician graduates of emergency medicine residencies are choosing to practice in rural

settings.

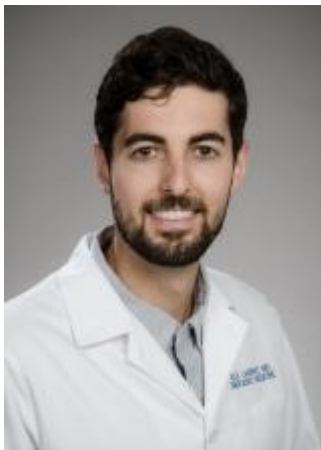
Without a change to current trends, rural emergency department patients will continue to be denied the specialty care delivered to patients in urban hospital emergency departments.

Several studies have suggested that specialists including emergency medicine physicians are more likely to choose to live and work in a rural setting if they had completed a “rural rotation” in such a site during their residency training. In the United States, very few emergency medicine residency training programs have designated rural emergency medicine rotations available for such a clinical experience. Several barriers exist to establishing these clinical experiences including fiscal barriers and the requirement of clinical oversight by board-certified attending emergency physicians. **The rural emergency department at PeaceHealth Peace Island is fully staffed by board-certified attending emergency physicians and was recognized as an ideal site by the University of Washington for a unique rural clinical experience for resident physicians. The rotation is overseen by Jason Heiner, MD, who is an attending physician in emergency departments at**

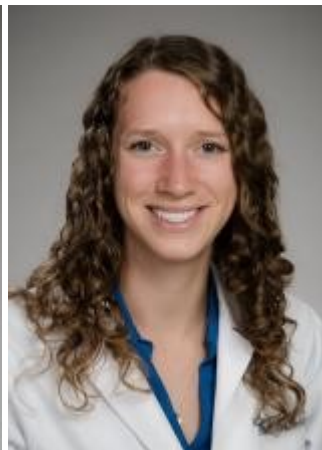
both PeaceHealth Peace Island and the University of Washington. He is also originally from a rural community.

During the past five summers, emergency medicine residents from the University of Washington have been working clinically in the emergency department at PeaceHealth Peace Island. They work under the supervision of experienced emergency physicians and their rotation includes additional clinical exposure to rural emergency medical services and air ambulance evacuations. After this summer, 24 University of Washington emergency medicine residents will have taken part in this unique experience. Of the 20 residents who have completed the rotation thus far and graduated from their UW specialty training, seven of these physicians currently provide care in rural medical settings. Three of these former graduates have returned to PeaceHealth Peace Island as board-certified attending emergency physicians.

PeaceHealth Peace Island and the community of Friday Harbor are excited to welcome these physicians to the San Juan Islands for the Summer of 2019.



Dr. Lambert



Dr. Liz Harmon



Dr. DeeDee Souza



Dr. Jack Ludwig