

We asked UW Medicine a set of questions. They have provided written answers which you will find below. You will also find on another page the notes we took of the conversation between the candidates for commissioner and UW Medicine. Please find those at <http://www.madronavoices.com/clinics/>

There is some overlap between the questions we asked and what the candidates asked but we believe you will find some additional material here that you will find of interest. Debra Gussin and her team provided the answers you find here.

Please tell us a bit about Debra Gussin. What role does she play at UW?

Debra is the Executive Director of the UW Neighborhood Clinics, the primary care network for UW Medicine, including our clinics on Orcas and Lopez Islands.

As a public entity, UW cannot campaign for passage of the public hospital district. What does UW bring to the island that wouldn't be here without UW?

UW Medicine was asked to take over running the Orcas Clinic last year when Island Hospital decided to terminate its contract. In the absence of another health system taking over operations, the clinic would have closed.

We did a financial analysis and were transparent as to the projected start-up and ongoing annual costs. We signed an agreement with Orcas Medical Foundation to take over the clinic as long as the community was able to cover the loss. UW Medicine does not profit from running the Orcas clinic.

We were also clear that we would need to be able to run the clinic independently, particularly in terms of provider recruitment and clinical standards. We agreed to step in as part of our public mission to serve the healthcare needs of our communities in Washington, and to be responsive to the community's strong desire for us to bring UW Medicine quality and service to the island.

We have implemented a new electronic medical record, hired several local providers to increase access to care, and have begun offering electronic specialty consults and other telehealth services that were previously unavailable to island residents.

Many people on-island were accustomed to knowing the person who answered the phone at the clinics, and calls were answered promptly. With UW, all calls are routed through the UW call center. There have been long wait times. Is there any possibility that UW will allow local receptionists to answer the phone, with a roll-over to the call center, if they are over-loaded?

Our central call center is a benefit that would not otherwise be possible for Orcas based on the size of the clinic. It offers access to scheduling across all of UW Medicine, not just the Orcas clinic, and is available 6 days a week, evenings and many holidays.

It also helps reduce interruptions for our local staff so they can focus on our patients in the clinic. We do provide the option of transferring directly to the clinic if patients prefer, during clinic hours if the clinic staff is available to answer calls.

A number of people are reporting that UW will not do courtesy labs for people who have mainland doctors that are not a part of the UW system. Is this true? If true, will UW consider changing this policy for Orcas Island?

Beginning in early April, UW Medicine plans to offer lab work for non-UW network providers for many tests. All lab specimens go to the UW Medicine labs in Seattle, and the results will be sent to the outside doctor of the patient's choice.

The procedure for lab work coming from Orcas will be:

- The patient will need to register with the clinic, so tests can be ordered and reported in the UW Medicine system.
- Patients will need to schedule the lab visit in advance and provide the order from the outside provider. UW Medicine will need to verify that it is a test that they are able to provide, although they mentioned that most should be.
- Once the labs are drawn, the samples are sent to the UW Lab in Seattle.
- After the test is done, the results of the labs will be sent to the outside, requesting provider.

Many of the candidates for commissioner have expressed a desire to see after hours and weekend urgent care on the island. Is this something that UW can facilitate? Can you give any cost estimates for providing this service?

Our agreement is to provide primary care for the island. If there was a desire to provide 24/7 urgent care it would take significant additional investment of dollars as well as recruitment of providers and staff. We could potentially consider the idea but funding would need to be available to cover those costs.

Some have estimated that UW needs a subsidy of approximately \$550,000 a year in order to operate a clinic on Orcas Island. Is that number close to correct? Would this provide UW a profit? If there is no profit, why is UW interested in being on Orcas Island?

Yes, that's correct. As noted above, this is not a profit. It just covers the annual loss of running the clinic. By joining the Orcas Island community we advance our mission: To improve the health of the public.

How do you determine the ideal number of doctors/physician's assistants for a clinic? What is a good number for Orcas, given the population and demographics of the island?

We determine provider coverage based on the number of patients and the level of medical complexity. For Orcas, we have added more providers than we expected, with Dr. Russell and ARNP Kirsten Pickard joining our team, and Dr. Mariebeth Velasquez covering for the last several months to expand our capacity. We'll continue to evaluate to make sure we can best meet the needs of the community, based on patient demand.

Does UW encourage its doctors or staff to refer people to the UW system over other health care providers?

We are happy to refer to UW Medicine specialists if our patients prefer, and if their insurance allows, but we also refer to other specialists depending on individual situations.

Does UW receive money from any other public hospital districts? If so, please describe.

We have a similar arrangement on Lopez Island with their newly formed Hospital District.

Some people prefer to use non-traditional medicine. Will UW consider allowing practitioners of alternative medicines to offer services through the UW clinic?

We could evaluate options like these depending on the licensure and credentials of those practitioners.

Are there any health care services UW provides in clinics elsewhere but not on Orcas Island? What are those, and why are they not provided here?

We are providing primary care on Orcas at the same high quality standard as all of our clinics. There have been requests for additional services such as dialysis and infusion. However, those are not services we provide in any of our other primary care clinics, and it's not likely that we could provide them on such a small scale on Orcas.

If a doctor left the clinic, how soon could another doctor be brought in to help carry the patient load? Who chooses said doctor, and what's the process?

We have a large team of excellent primary care providers, with the ability to provide coverage in the event of unexpected departure or absence, as we did last fall. All of our board-certified providers are hired and credentialed through UW Medicine and are UW faculty.

Will UW allow any licensed doctor that wants to offer services on island to be associated with the clinic? What is the criteria for being a UW doctor? Who makes the decision?

See above.

What is UW policy on those who come to the clinic without the ability to pay their deductible or who do not have insurance?

UW Medicine has a charity care policy that applies to all of our sites of practice, including Orcas.

What set of metrics should be used to determine the amount of subsidy?

We worked with Orcas Medical Foundation to determine the estimated subsidy for our current agreement, and would look forward to a similar process with the new hospital district.

How do UW neighborhood clinics differ from the UW clinic here on Orcas Island?

The quality of care is the same. However, our Neighborhood Clinics on the mainland are much larger so we have the ability to provide some additional services on-site such as nutrition and social work. Given the small scale of Orcas, our hope is to be able to provide some of those services virtually using telehealth options.

How can the public give feedback on how well UW is serving their needs?

We survey our patients using the same nationally-validated survey approved by Medicare, and we continually use those results to help guide and improve our practice. We are also very open to additional feedback, which can either be provided through the Orcas Medical Foundation or to our clinic manager who can make sure the question is directed to the appropriate person.