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## News Release

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### **Community Hospital Committee, PeaceHealth recommend further study for expanding Island healthcare services**

**Friday Harbor, Wash.** – A feasibility assessment presented today to San Juan County Public Hospital District #1 Commissioners recommends that the Hospital District and PeaceHealth, a Northwest-based not-for-profit healthcare system, sign a non-binding letter of intent that would enable further exploration of expanding healthcare services to residents of San Juan Island and surrounding islands.

The recommendation follows a comprehensive, four-month assessment of the feasibility of creating a new \$29.8 million integrated medical center on San Juan Island that would include an expanded community clinic as well as additional outpatient services and limited inpatient services. The assessment process was jointly led by the San Juan

Community Hospital Committee, members of the Inter Island Medical Center (IIMC) staff, the Hospital District Board, and representatives from PeaceHealth. The group was also supported by independent consultants.

“From the beginning, this has been a community-led effort to provide for the long-term healthcare needs of our Island residents,” said Tom Cable, Co-chair of the San Juan Community Hospital Committee, a group of 14 Island residents, including physicians, allied health professionals, and business and philanthropic leaders. “This assessment provides our community with comprehensive data that will allow us to objectively decide how to provide for our future healthcare needs.”

The community’s current facility -- Inter Island Medical Center -- offers basic diagnostic equipment and family practice services, but must send many patients off-Island for additional diagnosis, testing and procedures. On-Island services are provided in a 34-year-old facility with a diminishing ability to serve a rapidly growing population and no additional capacity for expansion or in-patient care. PeaceHealth was invited into the process after the Hospital Committee concluded that the Island’s future needs could best be served by a healthcare provider with deep experience in operating both small, critical access hospitals as well as larger, urban medical centers. PeaceHealth has been serving the Islanders for more than 120 years, providing an array of outpatient and inpatient services from Bellingham, WA.

“PeaceHealth was honored to be invited into the process to consider expanding our service to the Island community. An expanded collaboration with the San Juan Island community would be fully aligned with our mission, vision and values,” said Peter Adler, PeaceHealth’s Senior Vice President for Strategy, Innovation and Development. “We work in service to our communities, and strive to deliver safe, evidence-based, compassionate care to every patient; every time, every touch.”

The initial feasibility assessment presented to the Commissioners found that building and operating the proposed new integrated medical center could be fully financed without increasing taxes for Hospital District residents.

The Hospital District Commissioners will seek community input and discussion regarding the recommendation before making a final decision on whether to sign a non-binding letter of intent with PeaceHealth. A Special Meeting of the Hospital District Board has been scheduled for June 11, to allow for extensive, fully informed discussion with the community. The Commissioners, and members of the Assessment Team, including Islanders, consultants and PeaceHealth staff, will be present to answer questions, listen to feedback and participate in the discussion.

If approved and signed by the Hospital District and PeaceHealth Boards, the letter of intent would allow the two organizations to further explore financial, operational and implementation details related to building the proposed new integrated medical center. Hospital District and PeaceHealth Board consideration and decisions are expected in late June and July, respectively. A final decision to build and operate the proposed facility would require an additional approvals from both the Hospital District and PeaceHealth Boards.

The proposed new integrated medical center would house, under one roof, an expanded clinic, a variety of outpatient services (e.g., procedures, imaging, lab), a 10-bed limited acute care facility -- certified as a Critical Access Hospital -- and an emergency department operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The proposed facility would be staffed by 44.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs) staff, including physicians, RNs, imaging and technical personnel, other levels of direct caregivers, and administrative support (the current Inter Island Medical Center facility employs 25 full-time equivalent staff.) This

increased staff size would present new education and employment opportunities for Islanders.

Visiting specialists would provide outpatient consultations and procedures. The new medical center would use PeaceHealth’s state-of-the-art information technology, and a variety of clinical and administrative services would be provided in collaboration with PeaceHealth. Collaborations with local Island healthcare providers would also be promoted. “We are encouraged by the depth of this assessment, and the picture it gives us in terms of how San Juan Island might move forward in planning for our future healthcare needs,” Cable said. “We’re looking forward to hearing more from the community and the Hospital District Commissioners regarding the recommendation to keep this process moving ahead.”

The assessment report estimated that the costs for the proposed new integrated medical center would be \$22.8 million for the facility and an additional \$7 million for all new medical equipment, furnishings and information technology. The facility would be funded from a combination of community philanthropy (\$10 million) and the San Juan Island Public Hospital District (\$12.8 million), with no new taxes. PeaceHealth would fund all medical equipment, furnishings and IT (\$7 million).

The proposed new integrated medical center would be owned by the Hospital District, and operated by PeaceHealth.

For a summary and overview of the feasibility assessment’s findings and recommendations, please visit [www.sjcommunityhospital.org](http://www.sjcommunityhospital.org).

The San Juan Community Hospital Committee is a group of concerned islanders working with skilled, experienced consultants, residents and potential collaborators, in an advisory capacity to the SJCPHD #1 Board, to determine how the growing Island population could

sustain and expand on-Island access to high quality, cost-effective medical care. For more information, visit [www.sjcommunityhospital.org](http://www.sjcommunityhospital.org).

PeaceHealth is a Bellevue, WA-based not-for-profit healthcare system with hospitals and medical centers in Alaska, Washington and Oregon that serve more than 57,000 patients annually in both rural and urban settings. Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, PeaceHealth has provided exceptional medicine and compassionate care to Northwest communities for more than a century. PeaceHealth annually receives national recognition for innovations in patient-centered care, patient safety and healthcare technology. PeaceHealth is frequently named as one of the region's best employers. For more information, visit [www.peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org).

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