GROW ANNUAL REPORT 2018 Health Care NW

### VISION

Everyone has the opportunity to live their healthiest life.

### MISSION

To increase the years of healthy life in the people and communities we serve.



### **Board of Directors**

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oard Committee Members

### VALUES

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We accept responsibility for our work, invest wisely, and do what we say we will do.

### INTEGRITY

We strive to make honest, responsible decisions and act in alignment with our mission, vision, and values.

### RESPECT

We treat people as we would want them to treat us and strive to understand and reconcile our differences. We practice professionalism and kindness with each other.

#### COLLABORATION

We work alongside our patients, staff, and community partners to improve health.

### INNOVATION

We adapt to the ever-changing needs of the future.

### **Senior Leadership**

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Christina Kobdish Director of Planning and Development

Carrie Shane Dental Director

**Desmond Skubi** Executive Director

# LETTER from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year marked the completion of one strategic planning process and the start of another. Too often, organizational strategic plans sit on a shelf and gather dust. We are pleased to say that ours didn't.

We are proud of our accomplishments over the past five years. These include expanding our facilities and services in Whatcom County and working closely with our partners to improve health outcomes throughout our community.

Adult dental care is consistently cited as one of the most-needed but least-available services in Whatcom County. Over a five-year period, we completed two capital projects to expand dental services. In 2016, we completed construction of a new adult dental clinic, adding 12 dental operatories to significantly expand oral health care services to adults in need. We are now nearing completion of a new North Whatcom Health Center in Ferndale, which will increase capacity by another 8 dental operatories. The new facility will also offer increased medical and behavioral health capacity, an on-site pharmacy, and lab services to better serve north Whatcom County.

We have also deepened our work with partner agencies to improve community health through initiatives in the areas of food and housing security, early childhood development, preventive care, opioid addiction prevention and response, and chronic disease management. We expanded our Mobile Dental Program to all Whatcom County School Districts and improved access to case management services. More of our patients now have access to affordable health care, with nearly 5,000 individuals enrolled in a health insurance plan by our Outreach and Enrollment team in just the past three years.

As we begin implementation of our next fivevear strategic plan, there is more to come. With the creation of a new Population Health program and the hiring of Community Health Workers. we are working to strengthen preventive care and chronic disease management, including partnerships with the Bellingham Food Bank and the Whatcom YMCA. In the coming years, priorities will include the continued expansion of medical, dental, and behavioral health capacity and the improved ability to care for our patients experiencing homelessness. We look forward to leading health care innovation - improving the health of the people and communities we serve, reducing the cost of care, and enhancing the patient experience of care.

Thank you for your support over the past five years and into the future. We could not succeed without you.

Sincerely,

Wenned Shel.

Desmond Skubi Executive Director



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

- We launched construction of a new North Whatcom Health Center with a groundbreaking ceremony in June.
- Our staff achieved "Silver Status" recognition from Immunize Washington for our childhood immunization rates, and our Ferndale staff received "Bronze Status" recognition for adolescent immunization rates.
- In October, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the opening of our on-site pharmacy at our Bellingham health center.
- The National Association of Community Health Centers named Unity Care NW a Bronze Level Advocacy Center of Excellence in recognition of our advocacy work promoting the mission of community health centers.
- We brought representatives from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Hawai'i Primary Care Association to Bellingham to help us celebrate National Health Center Week.
- We launched a Veggie Rx pilot program for diabetic patients, in partnership with the Bellingham Food Bank, PeaceHealth, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, the Community Food Co-op, and Community Health Plan of Washington.

- In memory and celebration of Dr. Eric Moldver, we dedicated Moldver Plaza at our 220 Unity Street health center in Bellingham.
- We continued to meet the need for adult dental services in our community by expanding adult dental care to another 1,170 adults.
- Thanks to our donors, our capital campaign generated \$2.1 million, as well as \$4.68 million in New Market Tax Credits, to build the North Whatcom Health Center. The new facility was also recommended by the Washington State Department of Commerce for another \$3 million in funding, which was included in the Legislature's capital budget and was recently signed into law by Governor Inslee. We also raised \$20,000 at our Annual Gala to support our nutrition programs.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded Unity Care NW \$285,000 to expand mental health and substance use services. We also received \$250,000 from Community Health Plan of Washington and \$113,787 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in recognition of our provision of high-quality health care.

# THE YEAR AHEAD

- A new five-year strategic plan will guide our efforts to further expand medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services in our community and improve health care services for our patients experiencing homelessness.
- We look forward to improving the health outcomes and engagement of our entire patient population through the establishment of a new **Population Health Program** and expanded availability of community health workers.
- We continue our work to decrease the costs of quality health care through our participation in Healthier Washington
  Medicaid Transformation efforts, including increasing immunization and well-child visit rates, addressing substance use disorders, and improving reproductive health.

- Our pharmacy plans to offer home delivery services in the coming year for those patients with transportation challenges.
- We are working with the Whatcom YMCA to offer a **Diabetes Prevention Program** for those patients at risk of developing diabetes.
- With the recent hiring of a Chemical
  Dependency Professional, DJ Hanson Epstein, we look forward to creating a chemical dependency and Medication Assisted Therapy program to address substance use disorders.
- Our Child and Family Counselor will be participating in a pilot program at Carl Cozier Elementary to provide on-site mental health counseling and needed referrals to students. Based upon the success of the pilot, we may expand this effort to other schools.



# MISSION, VISION, and VALUES

Mission, vision, and values statements are a public declaration of the hopes and dreams of an organization, describing who it is, why it exists, and what it aspires to become.

For many years, Unity Care NW's stated mission has been to "provide access to high-quality, affordable, primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services for all, regardless of the ability to pay." That certainly describes what we do. Community health centers provide coordinated, whole-person care in a way that breaks down access barriers, including the lack of financial resources to pay for the services patients receive.

But in a new era of population health – of looking not only at the health outcomes of individual patients but also at the health of our entire community and working to address health disparities – our Board of Directors recently chose to apply a public health lens to our work and revise our mission statement.

The new mission of Unity Care NW, as stated by our Board of Directors, is to increase the years of healthy life in the people and communities we serve. Unity Care NW further declares our vision for our patients and for our community to be that everyone has the opportunity to live their healthiest life. We carry out our work according to the values of respect, integrity, accountability, collaboration, and innovation. At the root of the newly-drafted statements that guide our work is a commitment to public health concepts that recognize health is determined by more than the medical care received or the individual choices each person makes. Health is greatly determined by environmental factors and personal experiences. Scientists have found that the conditions in which we live and work have an enormous impact on our health, long before we ever see a health care provider. Health starts in our homes, in our schools and workplaces, in our playgrounds and parks, and in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. When we recognize these contributing factors to health and longevity, we are better able to improve health outcomes of individuals and the entire community. We will achieve our mission when we collectively shift to a focus on health improvement instead of disease treatment.

As a community health center, Unity Care NW is dedicated to providing health care services that meet the needs of the whole person and to challenging ourselves to deepen our work in our community to ensure that the conditions exist for healthy life. With our new vision, mission, and values statements, we recommit ourselves to our patients, to our staff, to our community partners, and to our work to improve the health and well-being of everyone in our community.

# A HEALTHY START in LIFE

### With a goal of making prevention the foundation of health care, Unity Care NW is dedicated to establishing health at the beginning of life.

Over the past several years, we have prioritized service development and improvement for children and emerging families. We are pleased to report that Unity Care NW now cares for over 8,000 Whatcom County children.

We are particularly proud of the work of our Mobile Dental Program. The program was established in 1997 to provide site-based dental services at local daycare centers and Head Start programs. It has steadily grown over the past 20 years and now serves nearly 2,000 children annually. The Mobile Dental Program now visits all Whatcom County elementary and middle schools, as well as Head Start sites across the county. Our staff provide schoolbased preventive dental services, including dental exams, sealants, fluoride, and oral health education. The program removes barriers and connects children to dental treatment and ongoing care.

Our dental staff report that they have seen the impact of these services in the reduced prevalence of dental decay. These observations are supported by the results of the recent "Smile Survey" conducted by the Washington State Department of Health. The survey found that prevention is making a difference, with a significant increase in the number of Whatcom County kindergartners with sealants, regardless of race or ethnic group. The Survey also reported significant reductions in the number of third graders statewide who have ever had a cavity. In our Behavioral Health Department, we welcomed Adrienne Watkins, our first Child and Family Counselor, in 2018 to enhance our behavioral health services for children and families. We have launched a pilot at Carl Cozier Elementary School to provide school-based behavioral health services. Carl Cozier counselors report that the number of students in need of behavioral health services and the scope of the need outpaces their capacity. Families often find it difficult to access needed services during the daytime when children are in school and parents or guardians are at work. Offering counseling services in the school during school hours will remove a barrier to care for many students and families. Those who need more comprehensive services will be referred to our Bellingham health center.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that our new pediatrician, Dr. Elaine Peterson, joined us in March 2019. She comes to us from Moses Lake, where she worked at a rural clinic and hospital. With a particular interest in the behavioral development of children, Dr. Peterson's practice will complement the expansion of our behavioral health services for children and families.

We look forward to continuing to improve and expand our services for the youngest members of our community.



# FERNDALE FLOURISHING



The new health center will significantly expand access to primary medical, dental, and behavioral health services.

In November 2008, Unity Care NW established our Ferndale health center with five exam rooms and four dental operatories. When it opened, the Ferndale health center provided much-needed health care access to those living in north Whatcom County. In 2015, we leased additional office space across the street in order to offer behavioral health and outreach and enrollment services.

Although this facility has served us well over the past decade, we long ago outgrew its capacity. To better meet the health care needs of a growing population, our 2014-2018 Strategic Plan identified the construction of a new health center in Ferndale as a priority.

After a year-long delay because of uncertainty about the future of the Affordable Care Act, we broke ground for the 23,000 sq. ft. North Whatcom Health Center in June 2018. The facility is nearing completion, and we expect to open in July. The new health center will feature 16 exam rooms and 12 dental operatories, significantly expanding access to primary medical, dental, and behavioral health services. The facility will also feature an on-site pharmacy and lab. When fully operational, the North Whatcom Health Center will provide care to 9,500 north Whatcom County residents.

We are grateful to our donors, our staff, our Board of Directors, and to the City of Ferndale for making the North Whatcom Health Center a reality. It has been a long road, but seeing the project come to fruition has been an organizational milestone.

Come celebrate the grand opening of the North Whatcom Health Center! Join us on Thursday, June 27th from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and see the new facility.

#### Thanks especially to our top Capital Campaign contributors:

Arcora Foundation Chuckanut Health Foundation M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust The Norcliffe Foundation PeaceHealth The Taxpayers of

Washington State

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# PATIENT PROFILE Melinda Valenzuela

### Melinda Valenzuela was having a health crisis. She woke up one morning to find painful sores throughout her mouth.

Despite numerous visits to doctors' offices, no effective course for treatment had been found. She struggled for months. She had difficulty eating and eventually became bedridden. At one point, her son had to take her to the emergency room because she was so emaciated.

Things started to turn around for her when her daughter helped her move to Ferndale and into her home. Her daughter took her to see Jessica Wynne, an ARNP at Unity Care NW, who diagnosed her with an autoimmune disease and started a treatment plan that gave her some relief. She also learned she had gum disease and soon had three teeth extracted in an emergency visit with one of our dentists.

The extraction process continued with a series of regular visits over the next three years. "Drs. Ullsmith and Hutto were amazing," she says. Each visit gave Melinda more relief from the mouth sores, but she grew self-conscious because of the missing teeth. She had a hard time finding a denturist who would accept her insurance, but her Dental Assistant, Lois, went "above and beyond" in securing a referral to Dr. Clayton Sulek's office, whose intern Lisa set her up with dentures.

Today, she proudly flashes her new smile. Her eyes fill with tears as she reflects on the lifechanging events over the last few years. With her daughter's support and the whole person care she has received at Unity Care NW, she has been able to find a pathway to improving her health. Melinda hopes to find her own place soon, as she is becoming more independent and getting stronger.

Along with the medical treatment she has received, she's also learning how to reduce stress and improve her diet to combat her autoimmune condition. She is appreciative of all the dentists at our Ferndale health center for showing great kindness and to her Dental Assistant who was so attentive to her needs throughout the ordeal. But Melinda is especially sentimental when she thinks of the care she received from Jessica Wynne. "If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here. She saved my life."

## PROVIDER PROFILE Carrie Shane, DDS

Dr. Carrie Shane, Unity Care NW's Dental Director, has deep roots in Northwest Washington. With the exception of her time at dental school in Nebraska, she has lived her whole life in Skagit and Whatcom Counties.

Dr. Shane became interested in dentistry early in life. Her interests in art, health, and working with her hands, she says, naturally "led to the road of dentistry." From a young age, she enjoyed going to the dentist. When she got braces in high school, she told her orthodontist that she wanted to become an orthodontist too. It looked "easy and fun." She headed to dental school, but she soon discovered that she was particularly drawn to general dentistry rather than orthodontics.

After completing dental school, Dr. Shane returned home and joined Unity Care NW. When she started, the dental staff consisted of a couple part-time dentists. Now, 21 years later, she oversees three dental facilities and a dental team of 53 employees, including 13 dentists, 34 dental assistants, and 6 hygienists.

She takes great pride in her dental team and what they accomplish together. Teamwork is at the heart of the dental program. Staff enjoy great camaraderie, and it shows in the positive feedback from patients. "We can usually solve the patient's problem with everybody working together," she reports. "If I can't solve it, I know someone who can." In addition, Dr. Shane finds at Unity Care NW what she wouldn't be able to find elsewhere - the ability to work with a team of medical, dental, and behavioral health professionals to provide care for the whole person. Among her proudest achievements is the creation and growth of our Mobile Dental Program. When the program started in 1997, there was tremendous need in our community. They couldn't see kids fast enough. There were so many teeth needing fillings that appointments were booked out three months at one point.

Her staff now sees much less decay. Prevention has made a difference in the children we see. Today, the Mobile Dental Program serves all Whatcom County elementary and middle schools, all Head Start programs, and many private day care centers. The Mobile Dental staff is able to identify kids with oral health challenges and get them into care in a way that minimizes disruption to their parents' busy lives. She is pleased that the team is able to "work through dental fears" and make coming to the dentist a "happy experience for kids."

Dr. Shane is in a unique position as she reflects on two decades of providing care in the community and looking ahead to the future. With the opening of the North Whatcom Health Center, she anticipates further expanding access, particularly for adults, and working with underserved children earlier and earlier to prevent future dental decay. She looks forward to the implementation of our Population Health Program and connecting more children and families to a health home.

Dr. Shane is excited for what the future holds.



# MAKING a DIFFERENCE for PATIENTS

### Providing whole-person, high-quality, affordable health care changes lives.

The notes of gratitude we regularly receive from our patients are heartwarming and mission-affirming. We are dedicated to helping our patients live healthier, fuller lives. That means continuously expanding the medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services we offer while also improving the quality of care we provide. We embrace our role as healers. We celebrate with the patient challenged with out-of-control diabetes who receives the treatment and support needed to maintain healthy blood sugar levels. We share the relief of a child and parent when we are able to report "No cavities!" We are thankful for the opportunity to give hope to the young person struggling with anxiety and depression.

We take pride in our work and in the difference we make in the lives of our patients.

diabetic patients are now enrolled in our Veggie Rx program.

*"I've learned a lot how to portion your food and what to look for at the stores and on labels for what's good and what isn't."*  "Pain group is awesome!"

UCNW's Pain Management services helped nearly

200

**people manage chronic pain** while reducing reliance on prescription pain medications. Almost 250 patients benefited from our Food and Nutrition Programs.

*"I was eating* cakes all the time. Now I go get me some carrots or unsalted peanuts." *"After 15 years, Unity Care NW has given me a smile!"* 

We expanded adult dental access to another 1,170 adults in 2018. 5,000

children across Whatcom County have been served by our Mobile Dental Program since 2014, with a 58% increase in visits over the five-year period.

*"I'm thankful that my family now has a place to go for quality dental care* [after getting connected through the Mobile Dental Program]"

### FINANCES



### Expenses - \$30,050,291



## THANK YOU to our 2018 CONTRIBUTORS

Your support makes it possible for our patients to live their healthiest lives. We are grateful for your compassion, commitment, and dedication.

### **DONORS** Individuals

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\*Signifies 2018 donors to our North Whatcom Expansion Capital Campaign.

All efforts were taken to ensure accuracy of this list. Please contact our Planning & Development Department with questions or concerns: Development@ucnw.org or (360) 788-2628

## "Thank you for the excellent care you provide. It is so appreciated."

- Unity Care NW patient



**In-House Pharmacy** 

Bellingham, WA 98225

218 Unity Street

(360) 752-7406

### BELLINGHAM

#### **Medical & Dental Services**

220 Unity Street Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 676-6177

#### Adult Dental. Behavioral Health, and Administration

1616 Cornwall Ave. Ste. 205 Bellingham, WA 98225

(360) 676-6177

### FERNDALE

#### Medical, Dental, and **Behavioral Health Services**

Until July 1, 2019: 5616 3rd Avenue

6060 Portal Way

(360) 676-6177

UnityCareNW.org

After July 1, 2019: Ferndale, WA 98248 Ferndale, WA 98248