



# PATIENT HANDBOOK



MEDICAL • DENTAL • PHARMACY • BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**  
**DIAL 9-1-1**

**Not sure if it's an emergency?**  
Call Unity Care NW first

**Bellingham & Ferndale**

Phone: (360) 676-6177

Toll free: (877) 235-6850

**24-Hours Nurse:**

(888) 269-0876

**Call Center Hours:**

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Saturday

*Closed for lunch 12:30-1:30pm*

**Behavioral Health**

**24-hour Crisis Line:**

1-800-584-3578

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## HANDBOOK REVISIONS:

*This Patient Handbook is revised and updated on a regular basis. See the bottom of each page for the printing date, and please be aware that there may be updates not yet reflected in the version you are reading.*

Unity Care NW (UCNW) complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (360) 676-6177.

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните (360) 676-6177.



WELCOME

# Welcome to UNITY CARE NW



Thank you for choosing Unity Care NW as your medical home. Unity Care NW is here to help you achieve your health goals. When you choose us as your health care provider, you have access to a variety of primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services. Our patient-centered team approach engages you in your care and coordinates all the services you receive. Our goal is to help you make the best decisions for your care.

## YOUR PATIENT HANDBOOK

This booklet has important information for Unity Care NW patients. It includes details about appointments, payments, and Unity Care NW services and policies. Please keep your book handy. Make notes in it. Refer to it when you need information or when you make an appointment.

## YOUR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Unity Care NW is a local non-profit health care center. We serve all ages, from newborns to seniors. We are part of a national network of community health centers (CHCs). CHCs serve over 23 million people throughout the U.S. Our mission is to make health care available to everyone.

We accept Apple Health (Medicaid), Medicare, and private insurance. To keep care affordable, we also offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program. Eligibility is based on household size and income. No one will be denied access to services due to an inability to pay.

## YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

One thing that makes a CHC special is patient involvement in the health center. Patients make up the majority of the members of our Board of Directors. They serve as community representatives. They make decisions on which services we provide. They make sure we respond to local needs.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please call our Administrative Assistant at (360) 676-6177, ext. 1140.



# SERVICE LOCATIONS and HEALTH CENTER HOURS



## Unity Care NW Bellingham Health Center

Unity Care NW - Bellingham is located downtown. It is one block east of the Bellingham Public Library at the corner of Unity St. and Central Ave. Our parking lot is across the street from the clinic.

7:45 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday  
7:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday  
(closed for lunch 12:30pm - 1:15pm)

**Address:** 220 Unity Street,  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Main Phone:** (360) 676-6177

**Toll-free:** (877) 235-6850

**24-Hour Nurse:**  
(888) 269-0876

**In-House Pharmacy:** (360) 752-7406  
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Saturday  
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. closed for lunch, Sat. only

**Quest Diagnostics Lab:** (360) 733-3888  
7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Saturday



## Unity Care NW Bellingham Behavioral Health and Adult Dental

Behavioral Health and Adult Dental services are located one block from our main health center at 1616 Cornwall Avenue. Parking is also available at 1616 Cornwall Avenue. WTA buses stop directly in front of the 1616 Cornwall parking lot.

7:45 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

**Address:** 1616 Cornwall Avenue,  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Main Phone:** (360) 676-6177

**Toll-free:** (877) 235-6850

**Behavioral Health 24-hour  
Crisis Line:** (800) 584-3578

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# SERVICE LOCATIONS and HEALTH CENTER HOURS

*Continued from p.3*



## **Unity Care NW North Whatcom Health Center**

The North Whatcom Health Center is located on Portal Way, east of I-5. The closest WTA bus stop is approximately one block away.

7:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

**Address:** 6060 Portal Way  
Ferndale, WA 98248

**Main Phone:** (360) 676-6177

**Toll-free:** (877) 235-6850

**24-Hours Nurse:**  
(888) 269-0876

**Behavioral Health 24-hour  
Crisis Line:** (800) 584-3578

**Pharmacy:** (360) 752-7408  
8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

**Quest Diagnostics Lab:** (360) 296-7199  
8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday – Friday



# MEDICAL SERVICES

Unity Care NW offers primary & preventive health care for people of every age.

**We have a full range of primary medical services:**

- Well-child exams
- Immunizations
- Annual exams
- Women’s health care
- Prescriptions
- Diagnosis and treatment of acute illness
- Urgent care
- On-site testing and laboratory services
- Behavioral health care
- Care of chronic illness, such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS
- Reproductive health and contraception
- Sexually-transmitted disease testing and treatment
- Care coordination

**Primary Care Team Approach**

As your medical home, Unity Care NW is committed to a patient-centered care team model that engages patients and their families in their care. Our care team includes:

- Family practice and internal medicine physicians
- Family practice nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants
- Psychiatrists
- Mental health specialists
- Nurses
- Medical assistants
- Case managers
- Care managers

Other members of your care team include front desk, call center, referrals, medical records, insurance enrollment specialists and billing staff. We value the provider-patient relationship.

**Your Primary Care Provider**

Each patient has a *Primary Care Provider*, or *PCP*. We try to schedule all of your medical appointments with your PCP.

Your PCP:

- may be a doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.
- will help you with referrals to specialists, Unity Care NW mental health professionals, or other providers, if needed.



# DENTAL SERVICES

Unity Care NW provides dental care for children and adults. Our approach to care is based on prevention.

Our care teams include dentists, hygienists, and dental assistants. Dental services include:


- Exams
- Cleanings
- Sealants
- Fluoride treatment
- X-rays
- Fillings (restorative care)
- Removing teeth (extractions)
- Information on how to care for your teeth

For more information about access to our dental services, please call us at (360) 676-6177.

## **Emergency Adult Dental Care**

Unity Care NW provides adult emergency dental care on a walk-in, standby basis. Adults 21 and older can be seen on a first-come, first-served basis for dental emergencies. We cannot guarantee that you will be seen, but we will do our best to fit you into our schedule. If you are in pain or have swelling, you should arrive at the health center between 7:45 and 9:00 a.m. for a better chance of being seen. Please bring a list of medications you are currently taking.





# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A healthy body needs a healthy mind, behaviors, and lifestyle.

Mental and emotional health are important parts of overall health and wellness. Our providers work with you to help you achieve your health goals and improve your health.

Unity Care NW offers:

- **Behavioral health services** that are **integrated with your medical care** during your office visit
- **Traditional counseling and psychiatric services** for those needing a little more care
- **Case Management services** to help you access other community resources you need to be healthy, such as housing, food, and legal assistance
- **Groups** to develop new behaviors in a supportive environment
- **Substance Use Disorder (SUD)** counseling assessments and outpatient therapy”

At Unity Care NW, coordinated, integrated behavioral health care means that:

- You can work directly with a Behavioral Health consultant at your medical visit, with little or no wait for services.
- Behavioral health consultants and case managers are part of your primary care medical team.
- All of our counselors and behavioral health consultants work closely with your Primary Care Provider (PCP). Our specialists can suggest individual counseling, groups, and other approaches to treatment to meet a wide range of need, including anxiety, depression, and trauma.
- Our PCP’s consult with our psychiatric providers when medication for behavioral health is appropriate. In addition, our PCPs can refer you to meet directly with a psychiatric provider if your needs are complex.
- All of our behavioral health providers can refer you to other community supports and treatment if UCNW doesn’t have the service you need.

## Behavioral Health Treatment Groups

Unity Care NW offers a variety of behavioral health groups to help you improve your health.

Our groups provide a safe environment to develop new healthy behaviors, decrease isolation, and provide support.

We offer groups such as: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Seeking Safety for Trauma Recovery, Substance Use Relapse Prevention, The Transforming Act of Forgiveness, Chronic Pain Management, and Positive Parenting. New groups are offered in response to our community needs and patient interest. Please ask the behavioral health consultant at your next visit, or contact our Behavioral Health Patient Access Coordinator at (360) 788-2660 for more information.



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## Children's Medical Care

Our children's medical services include:

- Well-child visits
- Newborn care
- Developmental screenings
- Immunizations
- Sports exams
- Specialty referrals

Regular health screenings and immunizations are very important for your child. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following ages for well-child appointments:

- 3-5 days (newborn)
- By 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 24 months (2 years)
- 30 months
- 3 years

Children should be seen every year from ages 3 to 21.

## Children's Dental Care

Children's Dental Care Unity Care NW is dedicated to breaking the cycle of dental disease that runs in families. Dental caries or "cavities" are caused by bacteria that can be passed among family members. Unity Care NW is dedicated to breaking the cycle of dental disease that runs in families. Dental caries or "cavities" are caused by bacteria that can be passed among family members.

Our dental services include:

- Exams
- Cleanings
- Fillings (restorative care)
- X-rays
- Sealants
- Fluoride applications
- Oral hygiene instruction
- Free custom sports mouth guards

We recommend that your child begin seeing a dentist by their first birthday or when their first tooth appears, whichever is first.

## Mobile Dental Program

- The Unity Care NW mobile dental program provides routine dental care at elementary and middle schools, Head Start programs, and daycare centers throughout Whatcom County. Mobile Dental Program staff provide exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, and oral hygiene instruction.
- For more information about the Mobile Dental Program, contact the Dental Access Coordinator at (360) 676-6177, ext. 1181.



# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROGRAM

Unity Care NW's Communicable Disease Program offers comprehensive primary care, dental, behavioral health, and prevention services for our patients living with infectious disease conditions, including HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and sexually-transmitted infections. At Unity Care NW, no one will be turned away for inability to pay for services.

## Primary Medical Care

People living with HIV/AIDS in Whatcom and Skagit Counties and our patients with Hepatitis C can access primary medical care services at Unity Care NW in Bellingham.

Primary care includes pharmaceuticals, lab services, nutrition counseling and specialty referrals. For those patients at high risk of HIV/AIDS, we offer pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) which protects HIV-negative people who may be at higher risk of HIV by taking a daily dose of HIV medications.

## Dental Care

Comprehensive dental care (cleaning, exam, prevention education, restorative care, and specialty referral) is available through Unity Care NW dentists. Any Whatcom or Skagit County person living with HIV/AIDS may access this care.

## Behavioral Health

Unity Care NW offers an integrated behavioral health care program that coordinates patients' behavioral health care needs with their Unity Care NW primary care provider. Services include substance use treatment, mental health counseling, and psychiatric consultations.

## Multidisciplinary Team

The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) is a group of professionals made up of primary care providers, dentists, nursing staff, behavioral health providers, pharmacy staff, the program manager, an infectious disease specialist, and Lifelong case managers. The MDT focuses on providing the best care for each patient's unique health needs.

## Appointments and Additional Information

New patients wishing to schedule an appointment, or interested in learning additional information, should contact the Communicable Disease RN Care Manager at (360) 676-6177.

Unity Care NW will arrange an orientation for new enrollees and schedule an appointment with a primary care provider.

# PHARMACY and PRESCRIPTIONS

Our Bellingham and North Whatcom County health centers offer you the convenience of on-site pharmacy services. Our pharmacy staff works closely with your care team to make filling your prescriptions safer and easier. Unity Care NW provides a Sliding Fee Discount Program and other programs to assist both uninsured and insured patients struggling with high prescription costs.

## WHY SHOULD YOU USE THE UNITY CARE NW PHARMACY?

With **strong communication and coordination between our pharmacy and care teams**, we can help you avoid harmful side effects of some medications and manage your medication refills. **Unity Care NW is a non-profit health center.** When you fill prescriptions at our pharmacy, revenue is returned to the health center to expand and improve our services to provide quality, affordable services to our community.

## KEEPING MEDICATIONS AFFORDABLE

Our pharmacy accepts all major prescription drug insurances, and our health center works with all local pharmacies. If you have insurance, your pharmacy can tell you if your prescription will be covered. ***If you do not have prescription drug insurance, or if you have prescription drug insurance but have difficulty affording your medications, we have programs that may assist you.***

## MAKE THE CHANGE!

To change your pharmacy to Unity Care NW, please call our pharmacy staff at **(360) 752-7406 in Bellingham** or **(360) 752-7408 for North Whatcom**. They can assist you with getting your prescriptions transferred.

## GETTING REFILLS FROM US

Patients using the Unity Care NW pharmacy should provide three (3) days notice for refills. Call (360) 752-7406 for refill requests in Bellingham, or (360) 752-7408 for refill requests at the North Whatcom Health Center.

### Pharmacy Hours

#### Bellingham

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
(Closed for lunch Saturdays: 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)  
(360) 752-7406

#### North Whatcom

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
(360) 752-7408

## IF YOU USE AN OUTSIDE PHARMACY:

- Please call your pharmacy to request your refills at least three (3) business days before you are out of medication.
- Please do not call or come in to Unity Care NW for your refill. We will ask that you phone your pharmacy or schedule an appointment.
- If your prescription has expired, or there are any concerns about the refill, the pharmacy will notify Unity Care NW.
- If you call the pharmacy more than once for the same refill, they will send us another fax. This will only slow down the refill process.

## Return Your Unused Medication

Don't toss it. Don't flush it. Don't save it. Keep your family, our community, and our waters safe. Dispose of your family's medications by returning them in original packaging to our pharmacy. Accepted at our Pharmacy:

- Prescribed medications
- Over-the-counter medications
- Medication samples
- Medications for pets
- Medicated ointments/lotions
- Prescriptions and over-the-counter vitamins, inhalers, and EpiPens (unopened)

Our pharmacy now also accepts Narcotic and other Controlled Substances such as Codeine, Hydrocodone, OxyContin, Percocet, Ritalin, Vicodin, and Xanax. No IDs required. Simply drop your unused medications in the secure return box located in our pharmacy at 218 Unity St. For privacy purposes, please remove all personally identifying information from the containers before depositing them in the box. For more information about Whatcom County's safe medication disposal program, visit [whatcommedreturn.org](http://whatcommedreturn.org).



## MAKING an APPOINTMENT

To make an appointment, please be ready to provide the following information:

- Patient's name and date of birth
- Your name (if you are calling for the patient)
- A current phone number where you can be reached
- Whether the visit is urgent, routine, or follow-up
- Patient's insurance information, if any
- Whether the patient will need an interpreter

When you have all of this information, please call us at (360) 676-6177 or toll-free (877) 235-6850 to schedule an appointment.

### Appointment Information

- Write the time of your appointment on your calendar.
- Make sure you have transportation to and from the health center. Medicaid patients may arrange transportation 48 hours in advance by calling Northwest Regional Council's toll free number: (800) 860-6812. (See *Getting to Your Appointment* for more details.)

Each visit is scheduled so that we can care for multiple patients throughout the day. If you have multiple issues to discuss or need longer than the scheduled appointment time, you may need to schedule another appointment.

## GETTING to YOUR APPOINTMENT

There are a number of options for getting transportation to Unity Care NW. In addition to bus service and other transportation options, bike racks are available.

### Transportation Benefits with Apple Health

If you have Apple Health (Medicaid), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) may pay for your transportation to and from Unity Care NW appointments. DSHS offers bus passes, taxi rides, or help paying for gas.

To receive Apple Health transportation assistance, you need to call the Northwest Regional Council at least 48 hours (2 days) before your appointment.

Northwest Regional Council  
Toll Free: (800) 860-6812  
Fax: (360) 734-5446

You can also visit the Northwest Regional Council website at [nwrwa.org/Medicaid-transportation](http://nwrwa.org/Medicaid-transportation) for more information. If Northwest Regional Council is unable to answer your questions, call the DSHS customer service center at (800) 562-3022. Or visit the Apple Health website at [fortress.wa.gov/hca/p1contactus/Client\\_WebForm](http://fortress.wa.gov/hca/p1contactus/Client_WebForm).

### Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) Bus Service

There are many bus stops near Unity Care NW — Bellingham. The WTA Bus Terminal is three blocks southeast of Unity Care NW on Railroad Avenue between E. Champion and Commercial.

In Ferndale, there is a WTA bus stop adjacent to our North Whatcom Health Center.

### WTA Specialized Transportation

Specialized Transportation is provided to people who are unable to use the fixed route bus system because of a disability. WTA will pick you up and take you where you need to go.

You must complete an application for the program. Call WTA at 360-733-1144 (Voice or TTY) to get an application. Once you return the application, WTA will notify you within 21 days (3 weeks) to tell you if you may use the program.

# APPOINTMENT PREPARATION

## Appointment Cancellations and “No-Shows”

It is very important that you keep your scheduled appointment. If you must cancel or re-schedule your appointment, please call us at (360) 676-6177 at least 24 hours in advance. When you miss an appointment or cancel less than 24 hours in advance, that means that someone else who needs care has to wait longer to be seen. You can also leave a message at that number after hours.

If you call to cancel the day of your appointment, don't call to cancel, or don't show up for your appointment, it is considered a “no-show.” Multiple missed appointments or “no shows” may result in being placed on a “Standby Basis” for future visits, or in some cases, dismissal from our health care practice.

## Checking in for Your Appointment

It is important that you arrive on time to check-in for your appointment. At check-in we will need to verify we have the most current information for you on file in your chart, and often we have required paperwork that will need to be completed prior to your appointment with your provider.

## What to Bring to Your Appointment

- Your insurance card
- Your proof of household income (see *Questions Asked at Check-in* on the next page for information about why we ask all patients to provide this information)
- Minimum co-pay or Sliding Fee Discount payment for each visit

Also important for medical appointments, please bring a list of your medications, including the doses and amounts left of each medication, or you can bring all of your medications in a bag.

## Questions Asked at Check-in

**We are required to request financial information from all patients.** Unity Care NW receives grants to help lower the cost of our services. These grants allow us to offer more services and to provide a Sliding Fee Discount Program to those who are eligible. In order to offer those discounts as well as get and keep these grants, we must collect information about our patients.

Our Sliding Fee Discount Program requires that we collect the following information from those patients applying for program eligibility:

- Household income information
- Household size

In addition, grants that fund our services require that we also collect the following information **from all patients:**

- Household income information
- Household size
- Race and ethnicity
- Age
- Housing information
- Insurance information
- Veteran status

In regard to household income information, we ask that you bring information you have on the following types of income you receive:

- Most recent employment paystubs showing income (wages, salaries, tips and commissions) for the past 30 days
- Previous year's IRS 1040 personal/self-employment tax return showing net self-employment or business income
- Most recent unemployment paystubs showing income for past 30 days
- Current year Award/Benefit Letter from other sources (Social Security, Veteran's Benefits)
- Proof of other types of household income (alimony/spousal support, retirement and pension income, Investment and rental income, per capita distributions from tribal gaming).
- Two months of most recent bank statements (all accounts)
- If you have no income, you can ask a receptionist for a self-attestation of no income form.

**Unity Care NW respects your privacy.** We understand that your personal information is very sensitive. We will not disclose your information to others unless you tell us to do so, or unless the law authorizes or requires us to do so.

# EMERGENCIES & AFTER-HOURS CARE

## Emergencies

If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go directly to the Emergency Room at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Hospital at 2901 Squalicum Pkwy., Bellingham. Some examples of life-threatening emergencies are:

- Drug overdose
- Heavy bleeding
- Poisoning
- Chest pain
- Convulsions or seizures
- Severe stomach pain
- Broken bones
- Severe burns or cuts
- Loss of consciousness (will not wake up)
- Severe shortness of breath (not able to talk)

## 24-Hour Care

Not Sure If It's an Emergency? If you have questions or symptoms and need to speak to a nurse, call our 24-hour nurse line at (888) 269-0876. Or, if you have insurance coverage through the Community Health Plan of Washington, you also have the option of calling their Nurse Advice Line at (866) 418-1002. The nurse will listen to your health concerns and help you decide what steps to take next.

# PROVIDING CARE to UNDERAGE PATIENTS

For most medical care and all dental appointments, patients under 18 years of age need a parent or legal guardian with them at their appointment to consent to care. We require written or verbal permission for the child to be seen without their legal guardian present, except in the circumstances outlined below.

Washington State law allows people under age 18 to give consent for certain types of care. Diagnostic and treatment information for these types of care will be kept in strict confidence. We will not share this information without the patient's permission.

- Age 14 and older may seek care for sexually-transmitted infection (STIs), including HIV.
- Age 13 and older may seek care for outpatient drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Age 13 and older may seek care for mental health treatment.
- Any age may give consent for birth control and reproductive care.

Unity Care NW providers encourage young people to talk to their parents or guardians about their health.



## A Note to Parents

We will do everything possible to help your child have a positive experience during their visit. You can help too. Tell your children good things about coming to our health center and taking care of their health. If your child is fearful, it will make it more challenging for both you and your care team to meet your child's health care needs. Help us get your children off to a good start so they can enjoy a lifetime of good health.

# REFERRALS and OTHER TESTING

## Test Results

Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) may recommend follow-up tests. You may be referred for:

- Blood work and/or other tests at a laboratory
- X-rays or imaging services
- Tests or follow-up at an outside provider

Before you use an outside service, make sure that it is covered by your insurance. We will notify you of abnormal results and let you know if you need to schedule a follow-up appointment with your Primary Care Provider. You may also view all of your lab results through our online Patient Portal.

## Referrals to Specialty Providers

Unity Care NW can manage your care best when your referrals to specialty providers are made by your PCP. If any services provided by a specialist are not covered by your insurance, you will be responsible for those costs. Unity Care NW will not be able to assist you with payment of those charges.

In addition, your insurance may require you to get approval before they will pay for the specialist. Unity Care NW referral staff can contact your insurance company for you and help you with this.

If you are uninsured, you may be eligible for lab and diagnostic radiology discount programs offered by our community partners. Please ask us how to apply for those programs.

# HOW to PAY for YOUR CARE

## Insurances Accepted

Unity Care NW accepts Apple Health (Medicaid), Medicare, and private insurance. If you have insurance, bring your insurance card to every visit. For a list of private insurance plans we accept, call us at (360) 676-6177.

**If you have Apple Health (Medicaid)**, you must be assigned to Community Health Plan of Washington, Molina, United Health Care, or Coordinated Care in order to receive care at Unity Care NW. If you need to switch to one of these plans, please contact Outreach and Enrollment at (360) 788-2669 for assistance.

Make sure that Unity Care NW is listed as your Primary Care Provider (PCP) on your insurance card. If you do not know who your Primary Care Provider is, call your health plan:

- Community Health Plan of Washington:  
(800) 440-1561
- Molina: (800) 869-7165
- Coordinated Care: (877) 644-4613
- United Health: (877) 542-8997

## If You Do Not Have Insurance

We can help you apply for health insurance. Unity Care NW's Outreach and Enrollment Specialists can tell you what you may qualify for and walk you through the application process at our Bellingham and Ferndale locations. For more information, contact our Outreach and Enrollment team at (360) 788-2669.

## Sliding Fee Discount Program

To keep your care affordable, Unity Care NW provides a Sliding Fee Discount Program. The Sliding Fee Discount Program can lower the cost of your care. It can help patients who are uninsured or who have high co-pays or deductibles. Eligibility is based on household size and income. Patients who receive assistance through the Sliding Fee Discount Program will need to complete paperwork each year to remain eligible. To learn more about the Sliding Fee Discount Program, call our Outreach and Enrollment staff at (360) 788-2669.

## Patient Accounts

Unity Care NW will bill third party payers for services. You will receive a bill if your insurance does not pay all or part of the charges for services you receive. If your insurance plan requires a co-pay, you will need to pay it at the time of your appointment.

If you are eligible for the Sliding Fee Discount Program, a minimum payment is due at the time of service. You will be billed for any fees over the minimum amount due, based on your eligibility for our Sliding Fee Discount Program.

You will receive a monthly statement if you have any outstanding balances on your account. If you cannot pay the balance on your account, please contact our Patient Accounts Department staff who will work with you to make payment arrangements. If you do not make payment or payment arrangements with our Patient Accounts Department, your care at Unity Care NW may be suspended. We will make every effort to work with you prior to that occurring.



# PATIENT RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

## PATIENT RIGHTS

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### Information Disclosure

You have the right to accurate and easily understood information about your health plan, health care professionals, and health care facilities. If you speak another language, have a physical or mental disability, or just don't understand something, assistance will be provided so you can make informed health care decisions.

### Choice of Providers and Plans

You have the right to a choice of health care providers and we will do our best to honor such requests. We are committed to providing you with access to appropriate, high quality health care.

### Access to Emergency Services

If you have severe pain, an injury, or sudden illness that convinces you that your health is in serious jeopardy, you have the right to receive screening and stabilization emergency services whenever and wherever needed, without prior authorization or financial penalty.

### Participation in Treatment Decisions

You have the right to know your treatment options and we encourage you to participate in decisions about your care. Parents, guardians, family members, or other individuals that you designate can participate in your care decisions at your request and/or represent you if you cannot make your own decision.

### Respect and Nondiscrimination

You have a right to considerate, respectful and nondiscriminatory care from your doctors, health plan representatives and other health care providers. Unity Care Northwest (UCNW) complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (consistent with the scope of sex discrimination described in 45 CFR 92.101(a)(2)). UCNW does not exclude people or treat them less favorably because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. For more information, see UCNW's [Nondiscrimination Notice and Language Access Services](#) handout, available at the reception desk.

### Language Access Services

If your primary language is not English, you have the right to language services at no cost to you, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages. For more information, see UCNW's [Nondiscrimination Notice and Language Access Services](#) handout, available at the reception desk.

### Confidentiality of Health Information

You have the right to talk in confidence with health care providers and to have your health care information protected. You also have the right to review and for a fee, receive a copy of your own health record. You may request to amend your record if it is not accurate, relevant or complete. We will not disclose your record to others, except as described in our Notice of Privacy Practices or required by law. You may get more information about your rights pertaining to your health record by contacting our Privacy Officer at (360) 788-2663.

### Complaints and Appeals

You have the right to a fair, fast, and objective review of any complaint you have against your health plan, providers, hospitals or other health care personnel. This includes complaints about waiting times, operating hours, the conduct of health care personnel, and the adequacy of health care facilities. To make a complaint or appeal, please call (360) 676-6177.

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# PATIENT RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

*Continued from p.15*

## PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Payment

Unity Care Northwest (UCNW) will bill Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW), Molina, and most other insurance companies. Patients will be billed in the event their insurance company does not pay all or part of the charges. Patients should bring their insurance card to each visit.

For patients who do not have insurance, UCNW has staff that can help you enroll in plans for which you may be eligible. Additionally, we offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program that provides discounts based on household income and family size to ensure no one will be denied access to services due to inability to pay or method of payment. Please inquire at the front desk if you are interested in either of these options.

Payment is expected at the time of service. If you are unable to pay the total amount of your adjusted charge at the time of service, you will need to set up a payment plan with our billing department.

### Appointment Cancellations and “No Shows”

If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment in the future, you are required to call us 24 hours in advance to cancel your appointment. If you call to cancel the day of your appointment, don't call to cancel, or don't show up for your appointment, it is considered a “no-show.” Multiple missed appointments or “no shows” may result in being placed on a “Standby Basis” for future visits, or in some cases, dismissal from our health care practice.

### Patient Follow Through

We believe individual patient actions are an important part of the healing process. When you are given instructions (such as prescription usage, home health care treatments, etc.), we ask that you follow them. If you have any questions or concerns regarding instructions, please contact us. Repeated noncompliance with your care team's instructions may lead to a decision to discontinue your health care services.

### Treatment of Staff and Patient Dismissal Policy

We are committed to providing high-quality care in an environment that maintains the integrity and safety of our patients and staff. To do that, we need and expect your cooperation. You are responsible for treating UCNW staff, fellow patients, and facilities with courtesy and respect. In the absence of such behavior, we may determine that you would be better served by another health care practice.

Patients may be discharged for:

- Abusive or disruptive behavior, including threats or vulgar language
- Forging prescriptions or getting prescriptions under false pretenses
- Violating an agreed-upon provider-patient care plan or refusing to follow a care plan that is recommended for patient safety
- Repeatedly missing or canceling appointments with less than 24 hours notice

Generally, a patient will receive a warning and be notified before being dismissed from care. However, in the case of physical abuse, threatening behavior, violation of a provider-patient medication contract, or forgery, the dismissal may occur without warning. Patients have the right to appeal their dismissal by sending a written request for consideration to the Chief Executive Officer.

### Weapons Free Zone

To enhance the safety of UCNW's environment for employees, patients, and visitors, UCNW is a weapons free zone. If you bring a weapon onto the premises, you will be asked to remove it to another location (such as a car parked on the street). If you are unable to comply with the request to remove a weapon, you'll be asked to reschedule your appointment.

# NOTICE of PRIVACY PRACTICES

**This notice describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.**

Unity Care NW respects your privacy and we understand that your personal health information is very sensitive. We will not use or disclose your information to others without your authorization, except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices or required by law.

The law protects the privacy of the health information we create and obtain in providing our care and services to you. For example, your protected health information includes symptoms, test results, diagnoses, treatment, health information from other providers, and billing and payment information relating to these services.

## YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS

**When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.** This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

### Get an electronic or paper copy of your health record

- You can ask to see or get an electronic or paper copy of your health record and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this.

We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 15 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee. UCNW may waive this fee for patients who demonstrate financial need.

### Ask us to send an electronic or paper copy of your health record to a third party

- You can ask us to send an electronic or paper copy of your health record and other health information we have about you to another party, such as a doctor or an attorney. Ask us how to do this.

### Ask us to correct your health record

- You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this.
- We may say “no” to your request, but we’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

### Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will say “yes” to all reasonable requests.

### Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us not to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say “yes” unless a law requires us to share that information.

### Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we’ve shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.

- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We’ll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

### Get a copy of this privacy notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.

### Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

### If you are under 18, you have the right to get certain services at Unity Care NW without parental involvement or consent. \*

- Sexually transmitted diseases (age 14+)
- Birth control services (any age)
- Mental health services (age 13+)
- Substance abuse services (age 13+)

If you have any questions, we encourage you to talk to your health care provider.

\*See Revised Code of Washington: RCW 70.24.110; RCW 9.02.100(1); RCW 71.34.530; RCW 70.96A.230

### File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting the Privacy Officer at the address at the end of this notice or by calling 360-788-2663.
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting [hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/index.html](https://hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/index.html)
- We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

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# NOTICE of PRIVACY PRACTICES *Continued from p.17*

## YOUR CHOICES

**For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share.** If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions. In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- Include your information in a facility directory, if applicable

*If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.*

In these cases we never share your information unless you give us written permission:

- Marketing purposes other than with insurance plans offering you information about coverage.
- Sale of your information
- Most sharing of mental health records, substance abuse records, and records related to sexually transmitted diseases.

In the case of fundraising:

- We may contact you for fundraising efforts, but you can tell us not to contact you again.

## OUR USES AND DISCLOSURES

**How do we typically use or share your health information?** We typically use or share your health information in the following ways:

### Treat you

We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you.

*Example: A doctor treating you for an injury asks another doctor about your overall health condition.*

### Run our organization

We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary. This may include phone calls and text messages to phone numbers you provide, emails, and mail through the US Postal Service.

*Example: We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services, remind you about upcoming appointments, and offer you services related to your care at UCNW.*

### Bill for your services

We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities.

*Example: We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.*

## HOW ELSE CAN WE USE OR SHARE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION?

We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes.

### Help with public health and safety issues

We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:

- Preventing disease
- Helping with product recalls
- Reporting adverse reactions to medications
- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
- Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone’s health or safety

### Do research

We can use or share your information for health research.

### Comply with the law

We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we’re complying with federal privacy law.

### Respond to organ and tissue donation requests

We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

### Work with a medical examiner or funeral director

We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

### Address workers’ compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests

We can use or share health information about you:

- For workers’ compensation claims
- For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
- With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
- For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

### Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

## OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

For more information, see: [hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/guidance-materials-for-consumers/index.htm](https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/guidance-materials-for-consumers/index.htm)

## CHANGES TO TERMS OF THIS NOTICE

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request, in our office, and on our web site at [UnityCareNW.org](https://www.UnityCareNW.org)

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/24/2023**

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Privacy Officer**  
 Unity Care NW  
 1616 Cornwall Avenue, Suite 205  
 Bellingham, WA 98225  
 (360) 788-2663

# PATIENT PORTAL

A Patient Portal is a secure website that gives you convenient 24-hour access to your personal health information. All you need is an email address and Internet connection.

Signing up for the Patient Portal is easy! All you need is an email address.

- **If you have an email address, you can request a Patient Portal account by visiting the Patient Portal page on our website.**
- **If you need assistance getting an email address,** stop by the Front Desk or call us at (360) 676-6177. We can help get you signed up.

To find out more about the Patient Portal, call (360) 676-6177 and ask to speak to our Portal Advocate.

## **Our Patient Portal Makes Your Life Easier!**

Accessing your personal medical records through a patient portal can help you be more actively involved in your own health care. Contacting your care team or provider through a patient portal can decrease phone tag and sometimes even save a trip to our health center.

## **You can use the Patient Portal to:**

- Enter or change your personal information
- Request an appointment
- Access your medical records
- Contact the billing department
- Contact your health care team
- Receive lab results
- Review your current medication list
- And more!

You can send secure messages about routine, non-urgent questions to your care team or provider through the Patient Portal. Your provider will respond in 1-3 business days.

# TIPS for PARTNERING with YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

This section includes tips for working with your health care team to help you get the best care possible during your visit. Your health care team includes you, health care providers, nurses, and other clinical staff. If you like, the team can also include your family or friends.

## Tip 1: Get ready for your visit

Make the most out of your visit with your health care team.

Write down your questions and concerns. Use a notebook to keep everything in one place. Choose the most important health questions to ask during the visit.

Gather your medicines. Write down a list of your medicines or bring them with you in a bag so you can let your health care team know what medicines you are taking.

Consider bringing a family member or friend to your visit. They can give you comfort and support and help you keep track of and understand information about your health.

## Tip 2: Tell your health care team about your health

Your health care team may know more about medicine, but you know more about you and your body. That is why working together is so important.

If something is important to you, we want to know about it. Be sure to tell your health care team about:

- The reason for your visit.
- Your symptoms or health problems.
- Your health before the visit.
- Medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you take.
- Allergies to medicines or foods.
- What makes it hard for you to care for your health
- Your mental and emotional health that may impact your physical health.

## Tip 3: Make sure you understand what your health care team tells you

Repeat what your health care team says in your own words. After your health care team tells you something, try saying, "Let's make sure I have this right." Then say the main points back in your own words. This helps your health care team know right away if they did not explain something well. Then they can explain it again more clearly.

Make sure you understand any written instructions provided. Take your own notes. It can be hard to remember all of the information you get during your visit. It may be helpful to write down what the health care team tells you in a notebook.

Ask for more information. Ask your health insurance plan for more information, visit your local library, or ask your health care team about trusted information on the Internet.

## Tip 4: Ask questions until you understand the answers

Speak up if something is unclear or confusing. You can say, "I'm not sure I understand what you just said. Can you tell me again?" or "Can you explain that in a different way?"

**Remember that you are a key member of your health care team. We want you to ask questions, get the information you need, understand the answers, and work together with us.**

# MY MEDICATION LIST

DRUG NAME

BRAND (OTHER NAME)

DIRECTIONS OF USE

NOTES/SIDE EFFECTS

PATIENT RESOURCES

DRUG NAME	BRAND (OTHER NAME)	DIRECTIONS OF USE	NOTES/SIDE EFFECTS