



San Juan County Public Hospital District No. 1
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In Appreciation to our Partners in Healthcare and the Public

This is a demanding time for healthcare in all of our communities as we work to help ensure the safety of the public. It's a time of worry and anxiety for everyone. We are grateful to Chief Administrative Officer Merry-Ann Keane for representing PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center (PIMC) at our first fully online Board meeting this week.

We want to echo Keane who said, "First and foremost, I'd like to acknowledge our caregivers and physicians—both at the bedside and behind the scenes leading COVID-19 planning and preparedness." We are particularly grateful that because our residents have taken social distancing seriously, Keane was able to say: "We do not foresee any issues or limitations treating patients in the emergency department at PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center."

Although PIMC is our primary partner in healthcare, which we subsidize through tax funding, we also acknowledge the efforts of Eventide and Dr. William House, who are working to help take care of our community even as they adjust to new management during a major public health crisis. For many healthcare providers including hospitals, this crisis has paradoxically reduced patient volume, adding financial strain even as expenditures go up to deal with the crisis.

Kyle Dodd, Incident Commander for the San Juan County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), also took time from his busy schedule to address the Board: "We've done a lot of hard work around surveillance and contact tracing," said Dodd. "We're also in touch with medical providers daily, tracking the number of tests that are performed... after being tested patients need to be isolating until they get test results. We're trying to make sure that one case doesn't become four, five, or six."

Especially good news was Dodd's statement that "Modeling out of the University of Washington indicates that Emergency Department visits are down, and hospital resources necessary to care

for COVID-19 patients will not be exceeded by need ... all the messaging is pointing to the fact due to Washington State's proactive approach to social distancing that hospitals are not being overwhelmed." Dodd later added, "In many ways, the situation we're in today isn't much changed from where we were on March 15th, and any let up in our attention to hygiene and social distancing could take us to a place of crisis in fairly short order."

"The whole operation is very impressive," said hospital district chair Anna Lisa Lindstrum about the county's EOC. "We felt very reassured by what we heard, and we feel grateful for how many committed and caring people are working to take care of the community." Follow the county's efforts at <http://www.sjccovid.com>, on Twitter @SanJuanCountyWA, and on Facebook @sjcpublichealth.

After these reports, the hospital district board heard from Superintendent Hutchins and EMS Chief Karl Kuetzing. The Board also declared a state of emergency. "We don't mean to be alarming with this declaration, but it is an emergency situation, and we are expending a lot of resources to fight this virus," said Superintendent Hutchins. "This should help us in getting funding agencies in a position to help us."

If you would like more information, the audio of this meeting is available at <https://sjcphd.org/meeting/2020mtgs>. Our office on March 26 released a letter from Superintendent Hutchins available on our website (<https://sjcphd.org/contactus/media>), which included a statement from PIMC, and a letter from Chief Kuetzing.