



Living **Healthier**

— WEST END —

Care When It Counts and Always with Heart

Forks Community Hospital (FCH) has an extensive history of providing excellent long-term care to our West End community, and we've been eager to share the changes we've undergone in our inpatient programs that allow us to continue doing what we do best in the future—care when it counts and always with heart.

The modifications to inpatient services, at FCH, and this includes the long-term care area of the facility, were made in compliance with regulations that allow **Critical Access Hospitals** like ours to provide care within the hospital, with the number of beds we are allowed and beyond a short stay from an illness, injury or a patient who many require further observation and skilled nursing care for a day or two.

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Around the Table

Meet the FCH Board of Commissioners

At the heart of our hospital's mission is a dedicated group of leaders who work tirelessly behind the scenes to guide our vision and ensure the well-being of our community. Our Board of Commissioners unites diverse expertise with a shared commitment to making a difference.



Don Lawley
President



Amy Ruble
Vice President



Chuck Carlson
Secretary



Sarah Huling
Commissioner

**Vacant
Position**

Reflecting ON CHANGE

Change happens all around us. Often, it can fly under the radar, but other times, the impact of change is very noticeable. In our premier edition of *"Living Healthier West End,"* a community newsletter designed to keep you informed about what's happening across the Hospital District, including Forks Community Hospital, our Rural Health Clinics, and West End Outreach Services. Through this quarterly publication, we aim to provide information to help you and your family achieve better health, wellness and outcomes.

In this issue, we turn to Sarah Fletcher, RN, Case Manager, to explain changes to our hospital inpatient services. We also asked Dr. Rebecca

Pfaff and Cassie Howell, our Clinical Informatics Manager, to reflect on how our new electronic medical record system is a game changer, improving efficiency and patient care.

Finally, we wrap up our first edition with tips for making small but essential changes in your daily life that can improve overall health with a focus on prevention.

As we anticipate changes to our West End weather with the arrival of fall, I invite you to follow us on Facebook and share your autumn-inspired photos using the hashtag #HealthierWestEnd!

Heidi Anderson
Chief Executive Officer



Epic Changes - BIG Impact On Patient Care

Forks Community Hospital, including our Rural Health Clinics, have successfully completed the shift to the world's most integrated and shared electronic health record system (EHR), Epic.



Simply log-in from the FCH website or download the FREE app!

"MyChart is also an important tool for family members who are primary caregivers, helping to ensure they have access to after visit summaries and current medications."

- Cassie Howell Clinical Informatics Manager

Access all your medical information and pay your bill in one secure place.

On June 22, 2024, FCH was excited to announce the completion of the implementation of our new EHR, Epic, in the hospital and rural health clinics; however, not including West End Outreach Services. This transition was not just a change in EHR; it was a gigantic step towards providing a better healthcare experience for our patients and more efficiency for our team of health professionals. In addition to countless benefits to patients, the move will significantly improve FCH's financial operations.

Heidi Anderson, CEO shared, "The decision to move to Epic signifies our dedication to

exceptional personalized care, quality, and patient safety. Epic offers many advantages – the most important is that each patient's medical history, medications, and treatment records will reside in one place for all healthcare professionals involved in your care, even if a patient is under the care of multiple providers at different healthcare organizations also using Epic for their EHR."

When asked why the transition to Epic was important from a physician's perspective, Dr. Rebecca Pfaff said, "This is an amazing improvement in how we can deliver care to patients. If you sign up for MyChart, you will have access to all of your results and notes and be able to communicate directly with your care team." Dr. Pfaff also says that one of Epic's notable features is that it tracks patients' routine health maintenance needs and that while Meditech patient information, FCH's former EHR, continues to be integrated into MyChart, "If you don't see your history from Meditech in MyChart yet, don't hesitate to ask about it because your FCH care team has increased access to all your records!"

Follow FCH on Facebook to continue learning about how MyChart can help make your healthcare information work better for you.



Manage Your Appointments

Schedule your next appointment or view upcoming appointment details.



Check-in for Your Appointment

eCheck-in before you arrive and complete required visit forms.



Request Prescription Refills

Send a refill request for any of your refillable medications.



Access Your Test Results

View your test results and healthcare professional's notes within days.



Communicate with Your Care Team

Get answers to your non-emergency medical questions from the comfort of your home.



Pay Online

View and pay your hospital and clinic bills.

CARE WHEN IT COUNTS & ALWAYS WITH HEART

Everything You Need to Know About Levels of Care



Remember the conversations about FCH's long-term care operations and the need for the District to transition the 20-bed unit located within the hospital due to significant financial losses, and the impact such a shift might have on residents and those in the community anticipating a need for the level of care provided in an LTC setting in the future?

We are pleased to provide an update on our comprehensive transition plan developed to ensure the needs of each resident were meticulously managed during the LTC transition, as well as a detailed explanation about the levels of inpatient care provided at FCH. This includes those who require longer-term skilled care in a

hospital setting, as well as those no longer needing skilled care; yet unable to return home or to an independent living setting.

To help explain these changes, Sarah Fletcher, RN, Case Manager, prepared a series of videos and downloadable educational tools to help West End families understand our Levels of Care.

In all we do, caring for our West End community at every stage of life is deeply personal to us. While we can't change payment systems that cause hospitals like ours to lose millions of dollars when caring for our aging population, we are working to ensure we remain here to care when it counts and always with heart.



Levels of Care

Beginning July 1, 2024, FCH "long-term care" changed to "Levels of Care," and this includes inpatient stays for patients whose medical need qualifies for an extended period utilizing a "swing bed," a term that only relates to the method of payment FCH can receive for this level of care.

There are four levels of care:

1 Observation

An observation admission generally lasts 48 hours or less because the care team anticipates the patient's medical needs can be met at FCH.

2 In-patient

An inpatient admission is typically a stay of four days or less. The intention with an inpatient admission is to treat the patient's illness until they are stable enough to continue care in an outpatient setting or return home.

3 Swing Bed

As a Critical Access Hospital, FCH can utilize a portion of its beds for patients who require skilled nursing care beyond their inpatient stay. Using hospital beds in this way is called "swing beds."

4 Non-skilled Swing Bed (EXTENDED CARE)

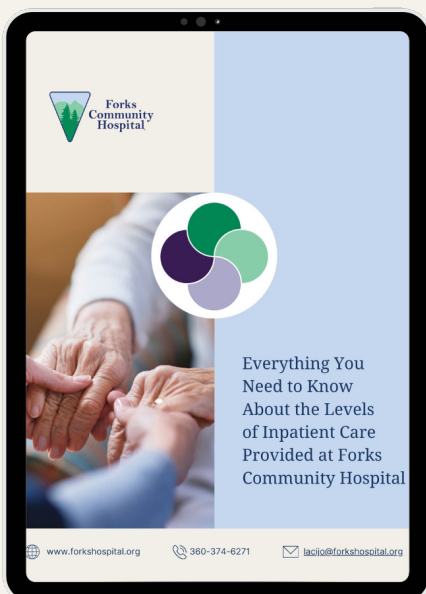
Non-skilled swing bed is a lower level of care than a swing bed that is utilized when a patient no longer has a skilled need. This level of care still requires the patient have had a three-day inpatient stay that met medical necessity.

The Future of Aging in Forks

Aging members of our community want to remain independent and close to home for their ongoing healthcare needs. While health conditions or other limitations may prevent someone from residing in their home, it is essential to have local resources to help ensure valuable community members are supported in their desire to age in place.

Below are some ways FCH works and collaborates with community partners to help make it possible.

- We refer regularly to Susie Brandelius at the Olympic Area Agency on Aging to start identifying programs that can support people aging at home. 360-374-9496.
- FCH RN case management team works closely with clinic providers to increase access to resources or referrals for equipment to meet newly identified care needs. 360-374-6998.
- FCH continues to work toward implementing a Palliative Care Program to provide additional support. Currently, we do have a chronic care management and transitional care management program coordinated through our Rural Health Clinics.
- FCH will continue to advocate for patient resources that are intended to serve all of Clallam County but are not extending to the West End.
- FCH will remain solution focused and committed to patient centered care at every point of contact with the organization.
- We cannot change the limitations in payor coverage or our healthcare system as a whole; however, we can make it a goal to work with what we have to find the best possible solutions for our community just as Forks has always done.



Scan the QR Code for More Information, to Download the Levels of Care Guide and Access the Watch Video Series



Want more information?

Watch our informative video series featuring Sarah Fletcher.

Visit
healthierwestend.org

To help explain each Level of Care provided at FCH, Sarah Fletcher, RN Clinical Case Manager has recorded a series of informational videos that are sure to answer any questions you have. You can watch each video on demand, and we encourage you to share it with your friends, families and others you think need to know about these changes too.

1. Long Term Care Conversion at Forks Community Hospital
2. What Has Changed About Long-term Care
3. Understanding When "Observation" is Needed
4. Understanding When a Longer Inpatient Stay is Necessary
5. Understanding the "Swing Bed" Program and How it Works
6. Understanding 'Non-skilled' Swing Bed Care and Who is Eligible for this Level of Care



Members of the Forks Hospital Foundation Pictured Left to Right: Angelica Almazan Luna, Diane Edwards, Heidi Anderson, Laci Johnson, Cassie Howell

Working to Build a Stronger Foundation Today and for the Future

So often, when we donate to causes we care about, it can be challenging to know precisely where our charitable dollars go. When you contribute to the Forks Hospital Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is to raise and administer philanthropic funds for the Hospital District, to support the health needs in our community, you can feel confident knowing that 100% of your generous contributions are making a tremendous impact and a significant difference right here on the West End.

Together with our volunteers, physicians, and other community leaders, the Foundation works to encourage public interest and

support of FCH and its many programs, services, and outreach activities in a manner consistent with the organization's long-held values and goals.

Through past fundraising efforts, the Foundation raised money to purchase Automated External Defibrillator (AED) units for multiple locations.

An AED is a life-saving device designed to diagnose and treat certain cardiac irregularities, primarily sudden cardiac arrest, by delivering a therapeutic shock to the heart.

In 2023, the Foundation received a generous donation of \$4,000 to kick off a 3-D Mammography Fundraiser. This year, we are stepping up our efforts because this critically

important technology in the fight to detect breast cancer at its earliest stage costs a half of a million dollars. The Foundation hopes to raise half that amount (\$250,000) while FCH leaders apply for grants to fund the remaining portion. Your support is crucial in this urgent mission.

Every donation, regardless of its size, is a step towards our goal. But we also recognize the need to build a stronger Foundation through volunteerism. Your involvement is not just appreciated; it's essential for us to continue making a positive impact.

Consider this your invitation to join the Forks Hospital Foundation. The commitment of your time in service is more valuable than you may know, but we hope you'll find it in your heart to find out!

Contact Laci Johnson at 360-327-8333 for details about how to become a member of the Forks Hospital Foundation.

Expanding our reach because our community hospital can't do it alone.

Achieving a Healthier West End is more than providing outpatient and inpatient health care services. The Forks Hospital Foundation works to expand FCH's capabilities through fundraising. Consider adding the Foundation to your charitable gift-giving this year.



FCH Faces of Care

Excellent Primary Care Happens When You Have an Outstanding Team.



Faron Bauer, MD
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic



Stephanie Bechtold, ARNP
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic



Melissa Estrada-Elena, ARNP
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic



John Lovejoy, DO
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic
Clallam Bay Medical Clinic



Harry Lyndes, MD
Family Medicine, Forks
Family Medical Clinic



Katherine Ouzounian, DNP, ARNP, FNP-C
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic



Rebecca Pfaff, MD
Family Medicine with
Obstetrics, Bogachiel Clinic



Vernon Rondeau, ARNP
Family Medicine,
Bogachiel Clinic



Donna West, ARNP
Family Medicine,
Clallam Bay Medical Clinic

Game on! It's The End of the Year Push for Prevention!

It's never too late to be your #1 Fan!



"Where did the time go?" That's what many people say when we get to this time of the year. It's also about when folks remember they forgot to schedule their annual wellness exam and other important preventative screening appointments essential for maintaining good health and detecting diseases that, when caught early, have the best chance for successful treatment.

So, while you set your sights on fall sports, pumpkin spice, turkey, and holiday lights, remember that your health is our priority. The healthcare professionals at Forks Community Hospital want to remind you to put a note on your calendar to make the call to schedule that test or exam, because, there is no time like the present!

Football Season vs. Flu Season

In the U.S., flu season can start as early as October, peak between December and February, and extend through May. And it's not "just" the flu! Did you know that every year, flu results in millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths? Aside from COVID-19, flu is the deadliest vaccine-preventable disease in the U.S.

The other thing to know is that everyone is at risk from flu; however, young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with chronic medical conditions are especially vulnerable.

As with football, the best defense against an opposing team is a great offense, and an annual flu vaccination, recommended for everyone six months and older, with rare exceptions, is an excellent game plan to protect against.

Follow us on Facebook for news about obtaining updated flu and other vital vaccinations. As a community, let's send the flu team packing.

#HealthierWestEnd is a Community Team Sport!



Want to work
some place
where you
can shine?

Check out career opportunities
at Forks Community Hospital by
visiting our online career page or
scanning the QR code.

jobs.forkshospital.org

Featured Jobs

We are always looking
for qualified clinical,
administrative and support
staff to join the Forks
Community Hospital
team. Some of our highest
needs are for medical and
laboratory technologists,
nurses, obstetrics and
family practice specialists.



Scan to view
all our career
opportunities
at Forks.

This newsletter is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of a licensed medical provider. The reader should regularly consult a licensed medical provider in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

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