

## **At-home Care and Care Coordination for Out-of-clinic Services on Orcas Island: Recommendations for Action**

In summer of 2025, stakeholders on Orcas Island gathered to build consensus and shared understanding about the greatest unmet needs on Orcas Island pertaining to healthcare. The goal of this stakeholder group was to prioritize project areas for funding and development in order to improve care coordination across systems of care on and off Orcas Island island. This workgroup of stakeholders included representatives from San Juan County Senior Services, Hospice of the Northwest, Orcas Community Resource Center, Orcas Island Health Care District, Orcas Fire & Rescue and Island Primary Care - Orcas.

The group agreed upon several areas of need: Home-based care, discharge follow-up, care management and coordination, dementia-care, transportation, in-community services and assisted living. This report provides background on the current state of these facets of the Orcas community care landscape, prioritizes categories of need based on feasibility, urgency, and funding potential, and defines recommendations for work focus areas going forward.

The priorities for change were determined by a collaborative process, based upon the initial brainstorm conducted by this workgroup, and subsequent discussions and research carried out to explore each of the seven brainstormed areas. The recommendations for action are summarized as follows:

1. Coordinated Caregiving System
2. Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Development
3. Emergency & Off-Island Care Coordination
4. Travel & Transportation Access
5. Health Education & Screening Services
6. Sustaining Long-term Care on Orcas

### **1. Coordinated Caregiving System**

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Health Care District (lead), San Juan County Senior Services, Debra O’Conner, with collaboration with Orcas Island Fire District

#### **A. Registered Nurse Care Manager Role**

- Define position scope
- Determine funding and administrative home (OFD or OIHCD, other).

#### **B. Caregiver-Client Referral Network**

- Design and build system: website + job-posting app for client-caregiver matching.

- Integrate with the care manager role/Mobile Integrated Health.

### **C. Streamlined Certification & Training**

- Map current caregiver certification needs and pathways.
- Simplify and localize training for new and existing caregivers.
- Determine pathways for funding/subsidizing certification process.

### **D. Caregiver Network Development**

- Poll all known caregivers on Orcas to assess the current landscape.
- Organize regular networking events and education sessions.
- Build communication infrastructure; email, job-posting app.

### **E. Affordability of Care**

- Explore subsidy models.
- Development of caregiver billing support for those who are willing to accept Medicaid.
- Explore public-private partnerships to fund care for low-income residents.

## **2. Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Development**

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Fire District (lead), Orcas Island Health Care District, with collaboration with Debra O’Conner, San Juan County Senior Services, and Orcas Community Resource Center

### **A. MIH Program Structure**

- Design roles and define population focus and goals of program
- Investigate Community Health Worker role in the MIH model.
- Align with Coordinated Caregiving RN role where applicable.
- Clarify how the clinic or other medical infrastructure might (or might not) be able to support.

### **B. Reimbursement models & budget planning**

- Research required certifications for EMTs (e.g. CHW, Peer Navigator) to capture medicaid dollars or grants.
- Explore collaboration and cost-sharing with other entities to expand possible scope of program.
- Develop a financial model for the program for 2026–2027.

### **C. Referral Management System**

- Choose a platform for tracking referrals across caregivers, providers, and services.
  - Build stakeholder buy-in for referral platform adoption and/or data-sharing.
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### **3. Emergency & Off-Island Care Coordination**

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Health Care District (lead), Orcas Island Fire District, San Juan County Senior Services, and Orcas Community Resource Center

#### **A. Emergency Room Communication & Discharge Planning**

- Conduct outreach to all regional ERs to assess current discharge practices, build relationships.

#### **B. Explore options for continual education and outreach to regional ERs regarding particularities of discharge planning for San Juan County residents**

- Link this process with MIH program development and Coordinated Caregiving System development.
  - Develop plan for improving systems of communication between ERs and Orcas-based social services to ensure all Islanders have adequate support in traveling home from ER. (ex: ER discharge resources packet sent with patients on med flights).
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### **4. Travel & Transportation Access**

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Health Care District (lead), Orcas Island Fire District, San Juan County Senior Services, and Orcas Community Resource Center

#### **A. Medicaid Reimbursement for Transport**

- Explore pathways to capture more Medicaid transportation benefit dollars in-county.
- Research feasibility for getting Island Rides and local taxis on Medicaid's provider list.

#### **B. Transportation Expansion**

- Collaborate with Island Rides to explore the possibility of expanding hours and service areas.
  - Evaluate gaps in current transportation (e.g., evenings, medical appointments).
  - Tie in with care coordination and MIH referrals.
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## 5. Health Education & Screening Services

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Health Care District (lead), San Juan County Senior Services, Orcas Island Senior Center, Island Primary Care Orcas, Orcas Community Resource Center

### Assess priority Health Areas for education & screening services

- Identify the most critical health topics for Orcas Island residents.
  - Ensure health education and screening services are inclusive and accessible for all Orcas Island residents.
  - Develop partnerships between service providers, San Juan County and local/regional entities to carry out services.
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## 6. Sustaining Long-Term Care on Orcas

**Project Participants/Advisors:** Orcas Island Health Care District (lead)

### A. Orcas Loving Care Support

- Conduct outreach to assess Orcas Loving Care's current and projected needs.
- Explore partnerships with the home-based care project.

### B. Billing & Subsidy Infrastructure

- Provide technical assistance for billing if needed.
- Build capacity to support patient access via subsidy or co-pay programs.