



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2026

NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY WITH SEA MAR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS TO OPERATE LOPEZ MEDICAL CLINIC

The Lopez Island Hospital District (LIHD) and Catherine Washburn Medical Association (CWMA) announced today that negotiations are underway with Sea Mar Community Health Centers (Sea Mar) as the preferred partner to operate the Lopez Island Medical Clinic.

Sea Mar was one of the first community health centers accredited by Joint Commission and has received the Gold Seal of Approval by demonstrating compliance with Joint Commission's national standards for health care quality and safety.

A Joint Negotiating Committee is leading the discussions with Sea Mar, comprised of members of the LIHD and CWMA, which owns the clinic building and equipment. Members of the committee have visited Sea Mar facilities, and Sea Mar leaders toured the Lopez Medical Clinic this week.

"I believe Sea Mar could be a good fit for Lopez," said Jim Orcutt, President of the LIHD Board of Commissioners and a former physician and medical school professor. "Sea Mar has extensive experience delivering high quality health care in rural and remote areas like ours. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, Sea Mar understands how to maximize federal resources while delivering quality health care, reducing the need for Lopez taxpayer subsidies."

"I'm encouraged by Sea Mar's track record of attracting and retaining medical professionals who are comfortable working in small communities," said Katherine Bryant Ingman, Board President of the CWMA.

Sea Mar operates more than 90 community-based clinics in Washington State, many in small communities and rural areas. For example, in Skagit County, Sea Mar operates eight clinics in Mount Vernon, Anacortes and Concrete. In addition to primary health care clinics, Skagit facilities include a Women's Clinic and Maternity Services.

Since July, LIHD and CWMA have gathered public input from more than 600 Lopez households through board meetings, community surveys and a town hall meeting. The two organizations also held listening sessions and heard from a variety of stakeholders about community health care needs.

UW Medicine has announced that as of July 1, 2026, it will cease its operation of the clinic. Of the eight health systems responding to our request for proposals, all but Sea Mar have either withdrawn from

consideration to provide a long-term solution or it has been determined they are unable to meet the community requirements to operate the clinic.

By the end of February, LIHD will convene a special meeting, a town hall, and a regular board meeting to review, discuss, and potentially approve moving forward with securing a contract with Sea Mar.

Upcoming LIHD meetings regarding the discussions with Sea Mar include:

Wednesday, February 18, 6 pm - Special Meeting of the LIHD Commissioners, Lopez Island Family Resource Center meeting room and Zoom

Monday, February 23, 5:30 pm - Community Town Hall to learn more about Sea Mar, Lopez Community Center and Zoom Webinar

Wednesday, February 25, 4 pm – Regular Meeting of the LIHD Commissioners, Lopez Island Family Resource Center meeting room and Zoom

Visit <https://lopezislandhd.org/news/> for more information about our potential partnership with Sea Mar and meeting announcements and <https://lopezislandhd.org/transition/> for the history of the clinic transition. To learn more about Sea Mar's mission visit <https://www.seamar.org/>

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