



Peaks COVID-19 Response Committee Updates and Bulletins

April 13, 2020

To: The Peaks Island Community

From: George "Bud" Higgins, MD
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Committee

On April 9th, Randy Schaeffer and I met by telephone with Dr. Elisabeth Wilson, Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at Maine Medical Center and her assistant, Dr. Tiffany Segre. I would like to share a summary of that meeting with the Peaks Island Community.

The major and most reassuring takeaway from our discussion with physician leadership in the Department of Family Medicine at Maine Medical Center was a much better understanding of just how much effort has been committed to increasing capacity and capability within the MaineHealth system should this pandemic seriously impact our community. One major concern here on Peaks has been access to care on the mainland for our most vulnerable and symptomatic islanders throughout this process. Active planning and preparedness throughout the MaineHealth system will allow this care to be there for them, even if our worst predictions become reality. Why?

- Current hospital census throughout the system is at an all-time low. Elective admissions have been canceled and patients are being more aggressively managed as outpatients. This has allowed anticipatory preparation of in-hospital space for COVID19 focused care if needed.
- Other MaineHealth affiliated hospitals, e.g. Southern

Maine Medical Center, are preparing similarly.

- Patients are minimizing contact with the healthcare system to avoid contact with COVID19 (and without obvious downside results/concerns on community health).
- The state is prepared to establish a COVID19 overflow care center at the Cross Insurance Arena intown if needed.

This meeting was a reminder that we are fortunate here in our island community for the support services, both formal and informal, we have in place to care for each other. Far more challenging situations are currently confronting our intown partners, e.g. working with Portland's ever-increasing homeless population to keep them safe.

Dr. Wilson was very receptive to increasing our ability to assist Kitty Gilbert and the Peaks Island Health Center in caring for islanders affiliated with MMC's Department of Family Medicine through the recruitment and credentialing of island-based health professionals. We are working on providing current credentialing information for those volunteers to Dr. Wilson. Throughout this process we are confident that we will become better prepared to assist as needed and as appropriate all islanders who may become personally impacted by COVID19, not just those with an established relationship with the PIHC.

Stay well, stay connected, and stay Peaks Island Strong.
