

The PCHS Story

In the beginning of PCHS....

Passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 led to the formation of community action agencies across the nation. Kitsap Community Action Program (KCAP) was one such agency. KCAP later became the current Kitsap Community Resources.

The 1980s

In the mid-80s, KCAP initiated a county-wide task force to address health care access. A program was started to provide health care information and referral services. The program led to the formation of a small volunteer-based clinic in Bremerton on the fourth floor of an old medical dental building at 423 Pacific Avenue. Kitsap Community Clinic (KCC) began formal operations in December 1987, guided by an active, involved 17-member community advisory board under the umbrella of KCAP. The stated mission was to “provide health care to low-income people who otherwise would not have access to health care systems, usually involving low income uninsured who were not otherwise eligible for state or federal assistance and those who await such aid.”



The growing part-time clinic transitioned to its own entity in early 1989, adding six staff members who provided primary care for over 2,200 patient visits and 26 dental referrals/financial assistance. KCC patients had household incomes of less than \$1,000 a month (minimum wage in 1988 was \$3.35/hour, the equivalent to about \$7.62 in 2025).

The 1990s

1990-1994

The clinic expanded to full time operation in 1990 and added Women, Infants and Children (WIC) services, offering nutrition counseling and food supplements at the Bremerton clinic. WIC services continued until 2004 when the organization closed its program due to service duplication in the community.

A second clinic was opened in 1992, offering part-time primary medical services to North Kitsap in Poulsbo on Third Avenue. The Poulsbo clinic expanded to full-time in 1998 with additional providers. The clinic would relocate in 1996, 2009, and 2025.

In 1993, however, the organization faced a serious financial deficit to keep up with the community need for services. A successful application for federal funding provided an infusion of \$233,125. By 1995 the KCC Board of Directors restructured to meet Section 330 funding requirements for a federally qualified health center (FQHC). The decision defined the future of the organization.

Staff numbered 25 in 1994 and served 6,466 patients.

1995-1999

Momentum gathered for the organization's growth. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in 1996 enabled the purchase of a building at 616 Sixth Street in Bremerton for renovation and use as a community health center (formerly the Bremerton Food Center shopping complex). Renovations were completed in 1997.

Dental services were offered in 1996 as a pilot project funded by United Way of Kitsap County. The organization's name was changed to Kitsap Community Health Centers to reflect expanded services.



The new headquarters building on Sixth Street opened in October 1997 and housed both medical and dental clinics with twelve exam rooms and five dental chairs in addition to WIC program offices, a pharmaceutical dispensary, and administrative offices. Collaboration with Kitsap Mental Health Services began in 1997. The first full-time dentist started at KCHC in August 1997. A second dentist joined the following year.

KCHC acquired Grays Harbor Community Health Centers in 1999 and created a new corporate entity: Peninsula Community Health Services (PCHS).



KCHC/PCHS opened a third primary care site in Port Orchard in 1999, located on Pottery Avenue. The clinic relocated to a newly constructed building on South Kitsap Boulevard in 2006, expanding services.

The 2000s

2000-2004

The Clinics/Expansion

The Sixth Street clinic underwent a major renovation in 2001, expanding capacity for medical care and doubling capacity for dental care. The logo graphic was changed. The clinic would undergo another extensive renovation in 2018.



The organization built and opened a new health center building in Aberdeen for residents of Grays Harbor County in June 2002 with medical and dental services. Aberdeen Medical and Dental clinics were turned over to Sea Mar Community Health Centers in November 2006. Sea Mar CHC rented the Copalis Beach medical clinic until 2010 and the building was later sold to a private enterprise.

Program Services

- The Extended Hours program launched in 2002 at the Sixth Street medical clinic offering weekday evening, weekend, and holiday hours.
- PCHS opened its first Class A pharmacy at the Sixth Street Clinic in 2004 with a second at the new Port Orchard building in 2006.

2005-2009

The Clinics/Expansion

Operations began at the newly constructed Port Orchard building on South Kitsap Way in mid-February 2006, moving from the Pottery Avenue location.



The Poulsbo clinic expanded and relocated to 7th Avenue in April 2009.

Program Services

- The organization began to transition to an electronic health record system in 2005 and completed the changeover to the new system in 2011 for both medical and dental programs. Significantly, four of the onsite pharmacies electronically integrated services with medical and dental records in 2011.
- PCHS became part of the Kitsap County Behavioral Health Alliance, a partnership of six health, law enforcement, and social service agencies formed in 2007, focusing on improving mental health services in the County.
- The year 2009 was a tough one with a change in the economy reducing the number of staff but not community health care needs.

2010-2014

Local homeless rates increased tremendously in Kitsap County and PCHS saw a rise in the rate of uninsured patients from 26% in 2009 to nearly 42% in 2010 and 50% in 2011.

Although the outlook appeared dismal for community health centers across the nation with cuts at the state and federal levels, PCHS continued to keep an open door for all.

The Board of Directors re-endorsed the mission statement in 2012: *Peninsula Community Health Services provides accessible, affordable, compassionate, quality health care services for our communities*, and added a guiding principle: *To see and value every person who comes through our doors*.

PCHS achieved accreditation in 2013 through the AAAHC (Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc) with its first application. The award included recognition as a patient-centered medical home, reflecting the growth of our Quality Program.



PCHS Pharmacy also achieved accreditation that year as a Diabetes Education Program through the American Association of Diabetes Educators. PCHS pharmacies continued a tradition of high achievement by receiving 100% in all categories surveyed by the Washington State Board of Pharmacies.

Full-time certified Enrollment Specialists were hired in 2013 to assist PCHS patients and the general public navigate full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The uninsured patient rate dropped to 32% from the previous year's rate of 57%. With complete implementation of the Patient Care and Affordable Care Act in January 2014, the rate dropped to 6% by May.

The Clinics/Expansion

A new clinic was established in 2012 in east Bremerton with the increased patient enrollment. The Wheaton Way clinic, located across the Harrison Medical Center Hospital, opened with an extended hours program.



The Sixth Street clinic restarted its Extended Hours program in December 2014 after suspension with the Wheaton Way program opening.

Program Services

- The behavioral health program expanded with grant funding in 2013.
- The Patient Services Center was created in 2013, centralizing phone services.
- Adult dental services were reinstated to Medicaid in January 2014 by the state legislature. PCHS hired its first dental hygienist to help meet high community need. PCHS served 24,465 patients in 2014.
- The published State enrollment report for 2014 showed that 68% of Kitsap County signups for insurance through the Affordable Care Act were accomplished by PCHS staff.
- PCHS was awarded funding for the SBIRT (screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment) program in June 2014 through passage of the 1/10th of 1% sales tax. By October 2014, the organization had processed 5,000 screenings with 30 referrals to care.

2015-2019

New leadership recharged the organization in August 2015 with the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer upon retirement of the CEO appointed in 1993.

A community mural was created on the backside of the Sixth Street clinic in June 2016 with the help of community members.

June 2016 and June 2019, PCHS achieved AAAHC reaccreditation (a three-year cycle), including recognition as a patient centered medical home in 2016 with the added certification of a patient centered dental home in 2019, reflecting continued dedication to patient care.



Wi-fi was launched in all locations in preparation for implementation of the Patient Portal and new electronic medical records system (Athena) - live in October 2016. The “MyPCHS” patient portal was adopted as part of the system.

The Board of Directors updated the mission statement in 2017 to *Peninsula Community Health Services provides accessible, affordable, quality health and wellness services for our communities*. The Guiding Principle was changed to read *To see and value every person*, in recognition of the trend toward telehealth and mobile services.

The federal “fiscal cliff” continued to be a concern in 2018. Congress extended 70% of community health center mandatory funding in March for the next two years.

The Clinics/Expansion

Administrative offices moved from occupying part of the third floor to the full second of the offices on 400 Warren in Bremerton in 2015, doubling capacity. With the relocation of two departments to Administration, space was opened for a new behavioral health suite on the second floor of the Port Orchard clinic (2016) and services expanded at the Wheaton Way Patient Service Center.

Dental clinic #2 opened in Port Orchard in August 2015, located in the same building where the medical clinic used to be on Pottery Avenue.

The Almira clinic (medical clinic #5) opened February 2016 on the campus of Kitsap Mental Health Services for one day a week to start, expanding to additional days the following year. Dental services were added to the Almira site in November with a grant purposed to expand

oral health services. The dental clinic (#3) was the first in the nation to be co-located with a community health facility.

Bay Vista property was purchased in November 2016 for future development.

The Belfair community gave a warm welcome in April 2017 to our first full service, integrated new construction in Mason County at 31 NE State Route 300, Suite 200.

A month later, PCHS acquired a clinic in Kingston (medical clinic #7) at the invite of the Swedish Medical Center in order to maintain medical services for the under-served Kingston and North Kitsap communities. The small clinic at 25989 Barber Cut Off Road reopened as PCHS in May 2017.



Dental clinic #4 opened in Poulsbo October 2018 as part of an innovative collaborative model. The new Fishline building on Viking Avenue houses several social service organizations working together to serve a mutual population.

Bremerton Sixth Street Clinic began an extensive remodel late in November 2018 with funding from the US Department of Health & Human Services purposed to increase patient access to 2,000 new unduplicated patients as a patient centered medical home.

Franklin Street Medical Clinic opened in January 2019, a one-provider clinic in Shelton, co-locating with Consejo Counseling and Referral Services. Consejo and PCHS partnered to provide downtown Shelton with integrated health care for primary and behavioral health care.

Mobile Services

Plans initiated to expand services with two mobile clinic vans as part of the organization's Strategic Plan. Mobile services began in 2019 with the Medical Mobile Clinic trekking to provide services to those with access issues. First stop, Salvation Army. The Behavioral Health Mobile went on the road in April that year with a team consisting of a community health worker (CHW), a Chemical Dependency Professional (CDP), and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LHMC).

PCHS behavioral health staff joined North Mason Fire Department's Quick Response Team (QRT) in November 2019, sending a Substance Use Disorder Provider (SUDP formerly titled CDP) to support the NMFD's calls involving overdose cases.

School Based Health Clinics

Working collaboratively with Mason County officials, a one-provider school-based clinic in the North Mason School District started the 2018-2019 school year. PCHS provided outreach services to the schoolchildren and staff.

Three new school-based clinics started in Kitsap County with the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Clinics are located at Esquire Hills Elementary, Fairview Middle School, and Mountain View Middle School. Services include medical and behavioral health.

Program Services

- Initial staff training for new Suboxone program services was held March 2016. The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program started in 2017; Chemical Dependency Professionals were hired. MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) services started at the Kitsap County Jail two days a week in 2019, endorsed by the Board of Directors as a means to provide continuance of care for part of our patient population.
- A successful apprenticeship program for medical and dental assistants began in 2017.
- PCHS' first Community Health Worker (CHW) was hired in November 2017, focusing on improving cancer screening visits for our patients. The number of CHWs expanded by the end of 2018, supporting patients by navigating community resources, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping our patients improve and maintain their health status. The CHW position would be replaced by the Care Coordinator position in 2024.
- Medication Boxes were installed in our pharmacy areas in 2018 to facilitate the disposal of expired and unused medications.
- A partnership with Bremerton-based Eastside Baby Corner (EBC) was formed early in 2018. EBC provides free infant and children's items. PCHS staff coordinate receipt of needed items to PCHS patients. The program was later renamed Kid Vantage.
- Telehealth became a regular part of psychiatric visits in 2018. PCHS received behavioral health licensure from the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery as a part of being recognized as a provider of mental health and substance use disorder services.
- Women's health services expanded in April 2019 with the onboarding of an experienced OB/GYN provider. The fledgling program was closed in September 2022 but a "light" OB program to support first trimester pregnancies was put into place.
- PCHS was appointed the lead organization in 2019 by the Washington Health Benefit Exchange to oversee Kitsap County's Navigator assistance program for the *Washington Healthplanfinder* as well as for the SHIBA program which assists seniors' enrollment in Medicare. PCHS would hold the *Healthplanfinder* general contract for five years, with ability to continue to assist PCHS patients.
- With support from the Kitsap Public Health District, needle exchange services were adopted in Kitsap County and the program began October 1, 2019.



2020-2024

The new decade started with the global impact of a highly contagious novel coronavirus. Kitsap County felt the beginning impact of COVID in March 2020 and PCHS met the crisis with uninterrupted medical services and innovative industry.

Effective in 2020, our region was reduced from five to three Managed Care Organizations (MCOs aka insurance plans) due to reassignment by the State. Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW) and Coordinated Care were eliminated. The loss affected thousands of our patients. All five were restored by 2022.

PCHS passed its federal (HRSA) operational site visit in early 2020 just before the pandemic shutdown and proudly passed with no findings; the 2024 HRSA operational site visit was also without findings. The organization achieved AAAHC reaccreditation with high marks in 2021 and 2025 with continued recognition as Patient Centered Medical and Dental Homes.

The Board of Directors updated the mission and core values statements in August 2021. Mission statement: *PCHS exemplifies a culture of community service*. Core values: Patient Driven/Empathetic/Staff Empowered. The vision statement (To eliminate healthcare disparities in our communities) and guiding principle (To see and value every person) remained unchanged.

The PCHS Foundation became reality in July 2023 with the filing of legal documents and the appointment of three Board members from the PCHS Board of Directors.



The Clinics/Expansion

PCHS co-located with Agape in early 2020 to provide mental health services in their substance use disorder treatment program. Telehealth behavioral health services started there in April 2020.

Despite the pandemic, a new medical and dental clinic in Silverdale on Bucklin Hill opened in April 2020, offering limited pediatric appointments in the newly built, COVID-free environment. Full services started in September.

The Key Peninsula clinic opened November 2021 with comprehensive services and our first drive-through pharmacy.

PCHS co-located with Kitsap Mental Health Services' new Pendleton Place, a supportive housing complex, in Spring 2022. A one-exam room clinic offers primary care medical services along with the PCHS dental mobile visit twice a week.

June 2022, PCHS purchased the Kitsap Rescue Mission building at 810 Sixth Street with plans to renovate for a developing medical respite program. The site was named The Willow Center.

A PCHS behavioral health provider worked from office space at the Salvation Army on a part-time basis starting in 2022 which closed May 2025. The space was not highly utilized, and the agency needed the space; the PCHS mobile vans continue to visit.

The Wheaton Way clinic was replaced with a renovated building on Clare Avenue in Bremerton with the medical side opening in September 2022 and the dental side in November. The Clare location offers comprehensive services as well as Extended Hours and houses the dental residency program.

PCHS purchased the former Bremerton Lindquist Dental building and practice after it closed in 2021 and opened the Family Dental Care clinic on Wheaton Way (Bremerton) in May 2023 as a pediatric-focused clinic.

Kitsap Children's Clinic (KCC) closed after 30 years of service to the community; PCHS opened PCHS Children's Clinic at the same Silverdale location in September 2023. Some of the KCC staff continued employment with PCHS.

PCHS opened a community clinic on Old Clifton Road in Port Orchard in April 2024; however, due to problematic city permitting, the clinic closed later in the year. While the clinic was open to the entire community, Clifton's focus was on serving and supporting individuals recently released from incarceration. Upon its opening, PCHS was presented with the "Innovating Justice Award" by the Washington State Courts in recognition of its pioneering initiative.

The Patient Service Center and the IS Department moved in July 2022 to office space on Wheaton Way. The Patient Service Center was renamed to Call Center.

Housing

Housing came into focus around 2023 as a public social concern. The Board of Directors approved the start of a separate housing program on a small scale in January 2023. Cedar House was purchased and renovated as voucher-based housing with two family units, re-opening in 2025 after repairing the results of a failed pipe in 2024 (while vacant). A new PCHS housing logo debuted in May 2023. A derelict Bremerton house, "Hemlock House", was purchased in August 2023 for demolition and future potential for the housing program. The Sage Apartment complex was completed and opened in 2024 as PCHS workforce housing.



Mobile Services

The Dental Mobile clinic launched services in April 2021.

The Bremerton Ambulatory Team (BAT) launched a month later in May 2021, and PCHS took delivery of its first wheelchair access van with a second unit pending. BAT would support the Bremerton Fire Department's EMT unit in a core area of the city.

In early spring 2022 PCHS expanded family planning services in Mason County through our Shelton clinic and mobile van.

In 2023 the fleet expanded to include the Peninsula Ambulatory Team (PAT), mobile Community Health on Wheels (CHOW), and mobile pediatrics. The mobile medical began visiting the Juvenile Detention Center in June 2023.

School Based Health Services

Limited services (due to continued COVID-19 social precautions) began in Barker Creek Community School and Klahowya Secondary School late 2020.

School-based services started for South Kitsap School District in August 2021, located on the Madrona Heights campus at the Discovery Alternative High School.

Three new school-based clinics were added to the network in 2022: Kingston and Bremerton high schools in March and Olympic High School finalized in August. By the end of 2022, PCHS was present in twelve school-based health clinics with the addition of Central Kitsap High School and Poulsbo Middle School.

Program Services

- PCHS became a contracted vaccinator with Washington State's Department of Health when coronavirus vaccines became available in December 2020. Staff provided

supportive services to the community through various means, including vaccinations on the Bremerton-Seattle ferry run. COVID cautionaries extended through 2021.

- The Immigrant Health Fund was added to the menu of patient financial assistance programs in April 2021.
- A Medical Legal program was added as a patient support service in 2022. The Legal department would expand to include a Medical Legal Partnership (MLP) attorney to uniquely represent PCHS patients. The MLP program is unusual across the nation by offering in-house assistance rather than outsourcing legal referrals. A clinical initiative to screen for social health-related needs was started as part of the program.
- A four-year pharmacy residency program started in 2022.
- The Youth Volunteer Program launched in 2023, as part of PCHS' Strategic Plan to build the workforce. The program offers 14–18-year-olds firsthand opportunity to discover potential interest in the varied career fields of healthcare.
- By 2024, 4,029 referrals were given through program screening for health-related social needs, an increase from the initial 2021 startup of 1,514. The top three areas of identified need were transportation, housing/utilities, and food.

2025-2029

May 2025, PCHS received state funding support for all (six) requested capital projects. The projects include a dental office at Spinnaker, a Bainbridge Island clinic, a community kitchen/meal center, and three re-entry housing units.

PCHS renewed its gold status as an Advocacy Center for Excellence in June 2025.

AAAHC reaccreditation was achieved in July 2025 with continued recognition as Patient Centered Medical and Dental Homes.

Kitsap County businesses, including PCHS, geared up for increased visitor/tourist space rental opportunities for the summer 2026 international soccer tournaments scheduled in Seattle.

The Clinics/Expansion

PCHS joined a collaborative partnership with Kitsap County in the newly remodeled Pacific Building in Port Orchard in March 2025. The multi-agency facility houses the county-operated shelter and several wraparound support services. PCHS

provides part-time medical services and coordinated care as well as visits from the medical mobile.



Poulsbo's new Powder Hill Clinic opened June 2025, replacing the previous medical location which closed on May 30th after nine years and one month of service.



PCHS purchased the United Way of Kitsap building at 645 Fourth Street, Bremerton for multi-use in November 2025 – reverting the building name to its original: Cascade Building.

PCHS began services on Bainbridge Island on Winslow Way December 29, 2025, offering medical and behavioral health care services in a four-exam room clinic.

Housing Services

October 2025, PCHS acquired the first of three planned re-entry duplexes as part of a jail transition housing program, funded by awards from state capital approval and the 1/10th of 1% Sales Tax Advisory Board. The Oak House in Port Orchard will provide case management services.

Mobile Services

The PCHS Mobile Healthcare fleet continued to connect with patients experiencing barriers to care. Community partners include libraries, schools, churches, foodbanks, transportation agencies, and various housing centers. Individual support is also offered through collaboration with emergency medical services (EMS) and the hospital system. The Mobile Dental Clinic, aka the “Molar Roller”, offers services in nontraditional settings. Other mobile clinics in the fleet provide pediatric and behavioral health services.

School Based Health Clinics

PCHS continued to strengthen its School Based Health Clinic program in 2025, expanding access to primary care and behavioral health services for students through a combination of onsite and telehealth visits. The model focuses on improving health equity, early intervention, and care coordination for youth and families.

Program Services

- In early 2025, inspired by experience with the national Reach Out and Read program, PCHS launched its Bookworm program, distributing children’s books to pediatric visitors, encouraging literacy and supported with donations of books and financial contributions.