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An Interview with John Long, President of MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, WA

John Long is the President of MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, WA. Good Samaritan's primary service area is East Pierce County, WA. David Peel, Publisher of the Washington Healthcare News, asked Mr. Long a few questions in the March 2009 interview.

You have a long history as a Washington State health care executive. Describe your work history leading up to your position as President of Good Samaritan Hospital.

I first came to the area in 1986 to serve as President/CEO of St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma. During my tenure there, I served as Chair of the Board of the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA). Later, I served as Vice President of External Development for Franciscan Health System, then served eight years in executive leadership as Chief Operating Officer with Group Health in both the Tacoma and Seattle locations, before moving to MultiCare Health System in Tacoma in 2004. At MultiCare, I was the Strategy Executive, a position primarily focused on major growth initiatives, including the eventual affiliation between MultiCare and Good Sa-

maritan. At the conclusion of the affiliation in August 2006, I was asked to become the first affiliation President at MultiCare Good Samaritan.



“The affiliation with MultiCare was a turning point for Good Samaritan Hospital.”

Describe the services offered by Good Samaritan Hospital.

The hospital is recognized for a variety of services, including a Level III Trauma Center, a nationally-certified, comprehensive cancer care program, a Level 1 trauma physical medicine & rehabilita-

tion center, state-of-the-art Family Birth Center, a top notch Orthopedics Program, and many others.

MultiCare Good Samaritan also offers a half dozen family care clinics throughout East Pierce County and several specialty services such as the Sleep Medicine Centers, the internationally known Children's Therapy Unit for children with neuromuscular disabilities, and the Good Samaritan Surgery Center.

As a part of our outreach services, we provide comprehensive behavioral health services throughout East Pierce County, screenings and immunizations through our mobile health program, as well as home health and hospice programs and older adult services.

In 2006, Good Samaritan Hospital became affiliated with MultiCare Health System, the large Tacoma based health system. What is the nature of this affiliation and how has it helped Good Samaritan Hospital?

The affiliation with MultiCare was a turning point for Good Samaritan Hospital. Prior to the affiliation, we were not in a strong competitive or financial position. The support from MultiCare helped us overcome those hurdles and get us

on the path to becoming the hospital that East Pierce County communities need and desire.

The influx of capital and expertise from throughout the extensive MultiCare system provided us the ability to grow, not just through expansion projects, but also through numerous clinical programs and services. For example, in January 2008, a 24-bed Cardiac Specialty Unit opened, focusing on serving patients with heart attack symptoms and related cardiac needs. Last fall Mary Bridge Pediatric Care at Good Samaritan opened, allowing young patients and their families the opportunity for specialized pediatric physician and nursing care close to home.

The affiliation with MultiCare has helped us breathe life back into Good Samaritan and rallied its employees, physicians and the communities we serve around our dynamic and energizing vision: to be the trusted regional medical center of choice for every person in East Pierce County.

In early 2008 you broke ground on a new \$400 million Patient Care Tower. What were the reasons behind this significant expansion?

This expansion has been something the community has needed and wanted for years. Many are not aware that Good Samaritan has one of the busiest Emergen-

cy Departments in the state. The original department, built in 1952, was designed to serve just 25,000 patient visits per year. We have far surpassed that number with over 61,000 visits last year.

It isn't just about the Emergency Department; the Patient Care Tower will provide expansive private rooms for our patients, with plenty of room for families, as well as an entirely new surgery department, imaging services and cardiac catheterization labs.

The tower will be technologically state-of-the-art and provide a beautiful, healing environment which will serve our growing communities for years to come. I am very proud to be a part of this renaissance and look forward to seeing our first patients in March 2011.

What else would be important for our readers to know about Good Samaritan Hospital?

One unique involvement for which we are very proud: for the past year and a half, MultiCare Good Samaritan has been partnering with the Ft. Lewis 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, on an information sharing project. This partnership developed from the Brigade's interest in learning about hospital infrastructure in order to replicate similar services to communities overseas.

Each member of the Brigade was

partnered with a member of Good Samaritan's staff in various departments such as physical medicine & rehabilitation, emergency department, campus development, and behavioral health. The partners met multiple times on Good Samaritan's campus to shadow our clinicians and share best practices.

This partnership has allowed the Brigade to understand the inside of a community hospital. When they are deployed this spring to Afghanistan, they will use what they learned here to help the local community there. We fully intend to continue our relationship with Ft. Lewis while they are overseas as they will be seeking advice and assistance in developing medical clinics.

This unique partnership between the military and our medical world has also benefited Good Samaritan.

For example, over the past 18 months we have welcomed soldiers from Ft. Lewis to participate in our internal disaster drills. Their experience and training in disaster preparedness has helped us streamline our processes.

The partnership has benefitted the two organizations beyond the initial expectation by building a relationship that will encourage best practices not only here in Puyallup but internationally.

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