



## Pacific County Local Forum Summary

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The October Pacific County local forum was combined with a visit from WA State Secretary of Health, John Wiesman. Secretary Wiesman was concluding his nearly two and half year mission of visiting with all Washington State public health departments. Pacific County public health hosted Wiesman on a community tour and conversation with local health partners including those that attend the monthly Willapa Community Network meetings held by Carole Halsan with Willapa Harbor Hospital. Wiesman addressed the group by outlining many of the key priorities his office is focusing their efforts on, including Accountable Community of Health development, childhood health initiatives including behavioral and mental health care, and many environmental health awareness programs.

Members of the community, including many local health partners, spoke on behalf on their organizations and community health needs in a roundtable discussion with the Secretary speaking on behalf of their organizations and community health needs. Commissioner Steve Rogers expressed the need for state level involvement for mental health concerns. Rogers stressed that support and attention for well-rounded services, including staffing and service accessibility, needed to be addressed in order for meaningful impact to be made in the community. CEO of Willapa Harbor Hospital, Carole Halsan, spoke regarding the hospital's status within the community and larger region. Halsan expressed that due to the change in critical access status, the hospital is being tasked to expand outpatient care services. This need comes from a high number of patients requiring outpatient services who are forced to travel outside of the community, often to large hospital structures, to seek care. By keeping the patients in the community and providing the needed outpatient services they require, both the patient and community as a whole benefit. Members of the public health department addressed the need for regional support for the medical reserve and emergency response program for the county. With a small public health department and a geographically "cut-off" location, Pacific County would benefit from support for these necessary programs including regional training opportunities for volunteers. Secretary Wiesman engaged with each member in attendance and further discussed the health needs within the community related to these gaps and opportunities.

The Willapa Community Network group will meet again in November for their regularly scheduled meeting.