



# Health Matters

Health and Wellness Information for Our Community



## Clinic Hours

Lopez Island Medical Clinic is located in Lopez Village at 103 Washburn Place.

Clinic hours:  
Monday–Friday,  
8:30 am- 5:00 pm

To schedule an appointment, call 468-2245 during regular hours.

Medical emergency?  
Dial 911.

[www.lopezisland-medical.org/](http://www.lopezisland-medical.org/)

## Health Matters

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## Transitions

# Farewell Jill & Maribelle

**T**ogether, Jill Blair and Maribelle Doss have worked almost 50 years at Lopez clinic. Next month, they mark another milestone: retiring within 3 days of each other.

Maribelle began her career in the front office with Dr. Dengler from 1978 - 1981. "I worked in a narrow little space with two filing cabinets, a desk and a typewriter," she says. She returned to the clinic in 1991 and has been here ever since. "The time went by fast!" she says. "It's hard to believe."

Jill joined the clinic in 1993 as a RN, becoming Clinic Manager in 2004.

What will retirement bring?

"It's a big open space out there – how to fill it? I think about it a lot," says Jill. "I haven't had *time* to think about it," Maribelle smiles.

Actually the answers come easy.

Jill: "My mom and dad live in Bellingham and I have eight brothers and sisters that I love being with. Gary and I have been married 43 years, we're looking forward to spending more time together. Lopez is a magical place. I'm looking forward to just relaxing here, being spontaneous, going for a walk on one of the fabulous beaches, watching the sun coming up."

Maribelle smiles. "Or...imagine going off island without *scheduling* a trip! Go see my kids, that's my hope." Her retirement date is December 13<sup>th</sup>, "close to the holidays, so I can enjoy them!" She, too has dreams on her retirement list. "I've always wanted to do a family

cookbook. I really like sewing and knitting. I just moved in with my mom (Mary Ritchie). We have lots of gardening to do."

Their feelings about the clinic, and the community it serves, run deep.

"People are so much more than just their illnesses," says Jill. "We often develop intimate relationships with our patients. It's personal work. It's added to my life and given me perspective I may not have known otherwise."



Maribelle and Jill

"Working here enriched both our lives," says Maribelle. "I just love it but I'm turning 65 and running out of energy. It's time for new people to bring in their enthusiasm and take over."

"The clinic has been a great place to work," Jill reflects, "all

the wonderful experiences we've had with our co-workers, all the challenges we've faced together."

"It's like a second family," Maribelle says gently.

Both women have brought stability, warmth and talent to their roles at the clinic. Their departures will be keenly felt. The entire community is invited to a going away gathering in their honor.

### *Jill & Maribelle's Retirement Party*

**Date:** Saturday, December 14

**Time:** 2pm - 5pm

**Location:** Lopez Golf Club

**Cake, snacks, tea and coffee will be served**

## Resources

Lopez Island Family  
Resource Center  
468-4117

Lopez Medical Clinic  
468-2245

Lopez Island Library  
468-2265

Washington  
Healthplanfinder  
(360) 688-7700

Washington  
Exchange Website:  
[www.  
wahealthplanfinder.org](http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org)

## CWMA Board Members

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**It's here!**

# Help Signing Up for Affordable Healthcare

If you have questions about how to sign up for health insurance through the new Affordable Health Care Act, you're in luck. Lopez has excellent resources to help.

First, a few bits of basic info:



- The exchange is an on-line system where private insurance companies list their programs. The idea is to compare options and choose the best plan for

you. States have their own exchanges. Washington State is working hard to fix bugs in the system. Even with a difficult start, 35,000 people in Washington signed up in the first three weeks.

- Depending on your income, you may be able to qualify for insurance coverage at no or low cost, be able to get insurance at more affordable prices or qualify for a subsidy to help with monthly costs.

- If you are on Medicare, you're already covered.

- Sign up began last month. If you sign up by December 23rd, your coverage starts January 1, 2014.

- People have until March 23, 2014 to choose a plan; after that, they will incur penalties.

If you have questions, these Lopez resources can help:

### Lopez Clinic & The Family Resource Center

As part of a federally funded program, Lopez Clinic and The Family Resource Center sent 3 staffers to a 2-day training to learn the basics of the new law and how to help people sign up. There is no charge for their service. "The focus is to help as many uninsured people sign up as possible," says Rachel Cory, Clinic Manager. "Individuals

make a confidential appointment with either Lopez Clinic or the Family Resource Center, come in and get help with navigating the Exchange website and sign up. Basically what we do is walk folks through the system."

*What if you already are insured, but need to choose a new policy through the Exchange?*

If your income situation is straight forward (i.e. one source of income) and you know how to use a computer, help is available.

"People with computer skills can come in and use our tech lab," says Stephanie Froning of The Family Resource Center. "It does make the process easier. We're here to answer questions that may come up and are happy to help."



### Lopez Library

Anyone needing assistance with computers can get help at the Lopez Library. "We'll give folks 1-on-1 help setting up new email accounts and navigating to the Exchange website if they need it," says Lopez Librarian Lou Pray. Since sign-up is only on line, those who don't use a computer can also get help with necessary log on and sign up functions. The library has also added a direct link to the Washington Exchange on its home page, under "Community Links" (go to <http://www.lopezlibrary.org/community.html>).

"I want to emphasize that the website is designed to be quite user friendly," says Rachel. "It's worth going on your own. Go on line, check it out. Many people have already signed up by themselves. If you're having trouble navigating it though, give us a call, all of us are happy to help."



# Stay Well This Winter

Even here on temperate Lopez, viruses and bacteria are as common as mud puddles in winter. Don't despair. A quick internet search yielded many ways to up your odds of staying well. Tips from the *London Daily Mail*, Atlanta's Center for Disease Control, *Parents Magazine*, CNN, herbalists and doctors around the country and the FDA had a lot in common, but there were a few surprises. Here are the greatest hits, read and approved by Lopez pharmacists Marge and Rick McCoy.

## 1. Job One: Wash Up

All sources agree this is the best way to avoid contacting and sharing germs. Warm water and soap do the job, *but only if you take your time*. The surprise: it takes a full 20 seconds lathering and washing to dispatch germs. One physician coaches patients to sing Happy Birthday twice to make sure. Try it! You may be surprised to learn you've been shortchanging yourself at the washbowl but don't forget to turn off the spigot when you're scrubbing up.

## 2. Job One 2.0

What about cooties when you're on the go? Money and door handles are common places germs lurk. Try hand sanitizer. Another tip: grab a wipe at the grocery store and clean the cart handle and pen at the credit card sign out station.

## 3. Rule of Thumb

The childhood rule still applies: don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth after your hands have been exposed to germs.

## 4. Get Your Flu Shot

Flu vaccine is the best way to avoid the flu. The ideal time to be vaccinated is by the end of this month, although December or January is not too late. A flu shot is needed every year because viruses change every year.

## 5. Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

If you feel stressed you are more likely to become ill compared to when you're feeling happy and relaxed. Two main reasons: the immune system doesn't do well when stressed and when it is, we're more likely to engage in habits like "Ben & Jerry's therapy." Under stress? Be aware you're more vulnerable and take extra precautions.

## 6. Catch Your Zzzzs

A good night's sleep isn't a luxury, it's essential to maintaining health. On average, seven to nine hours of sleep is best. Don't shortchange yourself; getting enough sleep is excellent self-care.

## 7. Go Outside & Play

Exercise stimulates immune cells that target cold infections. A University of South Carolina study found that people who regularly walked or did moderate activity for 30 minutes averaged one cold per year, while less-active folks reported more than four colds per year.

## 8. Eat Well

It can be tempting to fill up on less-than-healthy foods when it's cold and dark outside but resist the temptation. High-quality

proteins such as fish, lean meats and beans help build white blood cells (the body's defenders); bright colored fruits and veggies provide immune-boosting antioxidants; and omega-3 fatty acids (fatty fish, walnuts, and flaxseed) help balance the immune system.

### The Last Word:

Germs can be transmitted by air, so if you're within 6 feet of someone who is coughing or sneezing, turn your head for about ten seconds. If you're sick, do your part: sneeze into your sleeve, toss tissues immediately and, if possible, stay home until you're better.



Other suggestions, verifiable or not, also making the internet rounds.

## Change Your Toothbrush

Some dentists recommend a new toothbrush after a cold, flu or sore throat pointing out that toothbrush germs can lead to re-infection.

## Eat More Fiber

Some studies report that fiber in foods like oats, apples and nuts helps strengthen the immune system.

## Vitamin C, Zinc, Garlic & Probiotics

Whether these help depends upon who you talk to & your own experience. If you're a believer, be sure to moderate the dose and don't continue for too long.

# Health Matters

Catherine Washburn Medical Association  
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## Happy Retirement Marty!

**M**arty Clark started here as a volunteer EMT in 1977. “There were a lot of reasons I wanted to become an EMT. I used to live down on the south end by Gregg Blomberg during the summers. We talked about all the things we needed on the island back then – somebody to make shoes, that kind of thing. I said I’d do emergency medicine.”

By 1980 she was ready for advanced training. She began paramedic coursework on the ground floor of the new field of para-medicine. Lopez Fire Department paid \$600 toward her training at Skagit Valley Hospital plus a stipend of \$6 for each emergency call. She became Lopez Island’s first certified Paramedic in 1981. It was a volunteer position.

She was offered a full-time paid employment in February 1991 and has been serving Lopez as a professional Paramedic ever since.

“I get really close to patients,” she says. “They become dear, important people to me. And you can’t do that in a 5-10 minute aid call on the mainland. There are people that I’ve treated here for 30 years.”

Some colleagues on the mainland envy her intimate role on the island. “There’s a television show called Rescue 911 that reunites patients and their rescuers – EMTs, medics and such. My mainland friends sometimes grump: ‘No one ever gave me a picnic!’ I tell them that’s because they’re done in 10, 15 minutes at the most. Out here on Lopez, we get the picnic. I remember after treating someone early one morning, five or six of us went to The Galley for breakfast. The patient walked in and picked up the tab!”

“When I look back on my time in the department, what’s kept me going is primarily the EMTs I work with. These are the best people on Lopez. In a sense we’ve been through a war together. Our work creates a very strong bond, that’s what I’ll miss most.”

A potluck is planned to honor Marty and her years of service. The whole island is invited.

“What I would love is if the volunteers I’ve worked with over the years, the fire fighters and EMTs, my patients and colleagues would come and we could have a photo together. I would treasure that.”

**Mark your calendar! Community potluck for Marty**

**Date: Saturday, January 4, 2014**

**Location: Lopez Community Center • Time: 5 - 9 pm**  
**Bring written stories and appreciations for Marty's keepsake book.**



**Practicing for retirement. “I want to leave while I’m young enough to do adventure travel and long kayak trips. I have a lot of things to do!”**