

Project Abstract

Project Title: Prince of Wales Health Network
Applicant Name: Ketchikan General Hospital – PeaceHealth
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Description of the community: Prince of Wales Island (POW) is a remote island in Southeast Alaska. The third largest island in the US, POW encompasses 2500 square miles, and twelve distinct communities ranging in size from 11 to 1400 residents. Travel in this part of Alaska is challenging due to large distances, lack of roads, and inclement weather. It is inconvenient and financially unrealistic for many residents to travel off-island for higher levels of care. Travel off-island is by small plane or boat only; there is no commercial jet service. Unemployment is 12.9%. The population is decreasing due to declines in the Island’s main economic industries, logging and commercial fishing, and healthcare worker shortages are ongoing.

Applicant: Ketchikan General Hospital – PeaceHealth is one of 4 participating members of the Prince of Wales Health Network and is the applicant agency.

Primary problems, circumstances, and/or opportunities to be addressed by the Network: The healthcare system on POW is fragile and any loss or change of services can be detrimental to the community. Long term sustainability of Network infrastructure will be critical for viability of all health providers on POW. Behavioral health services on POW do not fill the current need. Planning will occur for improved emergency mental health services, substance abuse prevention, and integration of behavioral health with the primary care system. Network members will increase coordination of maternal child health services, improving access to prenatal, newborn, and reproductive health care. Increased community education will raise awareness of services available on POW and target specific areas of health concern. Expanded collaboration will be essential to sustaining services on POW and bringing additional sources of funding to POW.

How the local community (region) to be served will benefit from and be involved in the activities carried out by the Network: The community will have increased access to a full continuum of behavioral health and prevention service, increased opportunities will be available to youth, and improved coordination of maternal child health will lead to better family health outcomes. Increased resources and services will be brought to POW through collaboration of Network members. Network sustainability will ensure improved access to a wide array of quality health services for all residents. The community will participate in the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee, outreach and educational campaigns, and community forums. Community surveys will ensure education objectives are met and targeted health issues appropriate. The Network will expand membership to increase local representation on its Governing Body.

Funding Preference: The POW Health Network is requesting a funding preference as part of this application. Funding preferences that apply to the project and its proposed activities include:

1. Prince of Wales has Federally designated status as a “medically underserved area”
2. Prince of Wales has Federally designated status as a “health professional shortage area”
3. The project has a focus on primary care, wellness and prevention strategies.