

REFLECTIONS - THEN AND NOW:

March 14, 2023

Dear HealthPoint Bothell,

As I take my leave I would like to use this moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for welcoming me to HealthPoint Bothell in April 2012. I had in reality worked at this same location on Beardslee Blvd in the 1990s, at what was then Bothell Community Health Center (BCHC).

BCHC opened its doors in 1988 and was the smallest and northernmost outpost of the Community Health Centers of King County (CHCKC). CHCKC came into being as a response to the paucity of healthcare services in King County outside of Seattle. Its slogan at its inception in 1987 was: "We care for you. All of you."

For years, a significant portion of the population in north King County had never set foot at a medical center. BCHC embraced everyone, the vulnerable, less able, less insured, less privileged, the unhoused, the marginalized. Demand for care was brisk. A woman plagued by visual, hearing and gait impairment once crashed her vehicle into the flower pot by the entry in her zeal to be seen. One medical assistant could juggle 26 - 29 lab orders in a day while multitasking as site manager.

Those with mood disorders were counseled for as long as time allowed and if they were category A on the income scale the fee would be 25 cents. There was no EMR to scrutinize time spent or weigh hierarchical risk adjustments.

Providers prepared strawberry flavored amoxicillin or tallied up penicillin tablets at the clinic's dispensary. A refrigerator stocked vaccines that would be lugged in a doctor's bag to the local transitional shelter to get children up to speed with their well child visits. Shelves were stacked with alphabetically arranged drug samples and cans of Ensure cajoled out of Big Pharma reps.

During a bomb threat at the adjoining collection agency law enforcement directed front desk personnel to scan the clinic's premises for suspicious objects. Patients had to be evacuated and escorted to the parking lot to complete their exams. The 1996 HIPAA rule was not yet enacted, parking space was ample, staff passes were unnecessary and no one would bat an eyelid or summon a tow truck for cars parked askew or out of bounds.

Despite challenges, BCHC's team never wavered in their commitment to the community. For a time, in the absence of window shades, the only room that could be darkened for retinal checks was the dirty utility room. Amid one unseasonably frosty winter BCHC's patient care representative rose at the crack of dawn every morning to manually ignite the furnace's pilot light with an extra long match and usher in those who sought the warmth of a helping hand.

Not long after, the clinic relocated from 10413 Beardslee Blvd into a more accommodating structure across the road on 10414 Beardslee Blvd.

In 2008 CHCKC morphed into HealthPoint Community Health Centers and BCHC became HealthPoint Bothell. The new motto was: "Everyone Deserves Great Care." On-site amenities include nutrition, care management, patient advocacy, interpretation, quality improvement, referral coordination, outreach, dental, upgraded laboratory and IT among others. Most importantly HealthPoint bolstered primary care by integrating behavioral health directly into the front lines in the pursuit of whole person care.

HP Bothell pharmacists do not collect donated Ensure but focus on ensuring that patients receive appropriate long term monitoring and get the medications they need at a price they can afford.

Having learned many lessons at HealthPoint Bothell in the past decade it became clear to me that behind the myriad enhancements stands one enduring factor; a force of dedicated champions like you who carry out the mission of the organization. The conviction that guided your predecessors at Bothell Community Health Center then is what each and every one of you bring to HealthPoint Bothell now. At an event in Seattle a few years ago a public health administrator referred to HealthPoint as the Cadillac of healthcare, a reputation well earned and well deserved because of YOU.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to partake in your wisdom, generosity and compassion. I have treasured my time at Beardslee Blvd, then and now. I wish you the very best knowing that you will leave your indelible footprints at HealthPoint to help it deliver its goals long into the future. YOU are the HEART of HealthPoint !

