Vashon Health Care District 2026 Strategic Plan Update

Draft 8-25-2025

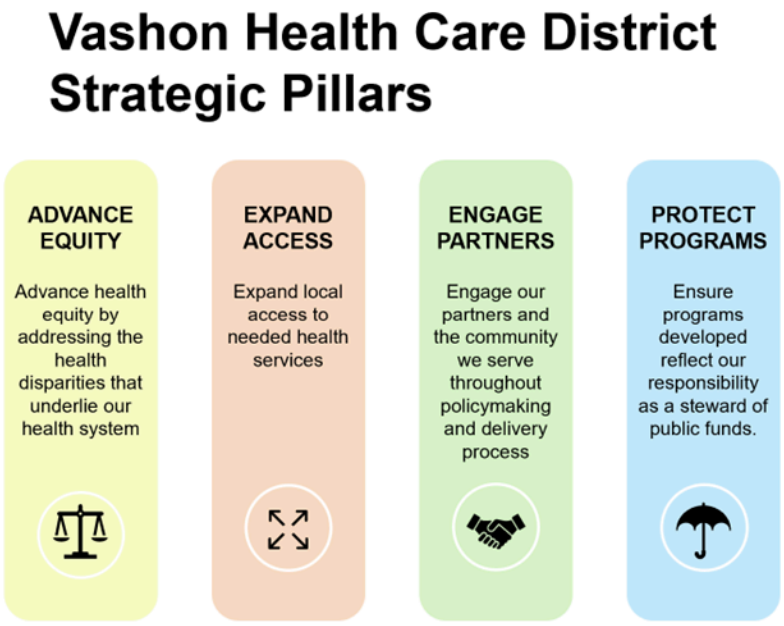
Who We Are

Mission

The mission of the Vashon Health Care District is to promote and maintain the health of the residents of Vashon and Maury Islands by supporting accessible quality health care through community partnerships, shared decision-making, transparency and responsible stewardship of resources.

Vision

We are accountable for individual and community health through partnerships and collaboration.



History and 2025 Review

In 2019, the campaign to create the Vashon Health Care District began. Its goals were clear:

- ***Assess current needs*** including primary care, extended hours, urgent care and other needs not currently met.
- ***Enhance services currently provided*** on Vashon Island by either working with current providers or seeking new providers.
- ***Sustain Vashon health services*** with local funds necessary to create and support long term stability in health care operations and facilities.

In November of 2019, the voters of Vashon Island agreed, and by a vote of 71-29% established the Vashon Health Care District and elected its first five Commissioners. The key 2020 task of those commissioners, along with hiring a Superintendent and creating an organizational structure, was to first sustain and then on short notice replace the primary care clinic provider on the island, all without the ability to collect tax revenue. This was accomplished by contracting with Sea Mar Community Health Centers, initially funded through an operating line of credit with King County Treasury Department, resulting in minimal gap in services. The District set its first levy in November of 2020, for tax year 2021.

2021 and 2022 were spent, both in terms of expenditures and operational focus, providing primary care services through subsidizing Sea Mar, implementing a plan to pay down the first-year operational debt, and acquiring a piece of property in the town core that had been held by an island benefactor for use as a new clinic site. In late 2022, Sea Mar declared its intent to operate independently starting in 2023, and to build a clinic on its own acquired site. The balance of 2022 was consumed with the hiring of a new Superintendent and the negotiation of an ongoing collaborative agreement with Sea Mar, including an option to purchase the future clinic should Sea Mar depart, and the use by Sea Mar of three million dollars in state funds previously acquired for a new clinic.

The VHCD spent 2023 re-examining its mission and vision, consulting with its constituents, and developing a strategic planning process to address its ongoing operations. It adopted three core strategic priorities:

1. Primary Care Sustainability/Reserve Fund
2. Urgent Care
3. Behavioral Health

Along with establishing robust reserves for Primary Care Sustainability, 2024 brought the implementation of key projects in the strategic priorities of Urgent Care and Behavioral Health. A youth behavioral health project was launched with multiple partners, featuring a school-based Social Worker and a part-time Therapist. DispatchHealth was contracted and launched 7 day per week in-home Urgent Care services.

For 2025, Vulnerable Adults was added to the previous three core strategic priorities. An initial launch of a Senior Social worker was followed by work to collaborate with the Vashon Fire and Rescue Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) unit on an expansion of services. Compassionate Care agreements were signed with DispatchHealth and Vashon Youth and Family Services (VYFS), allowing VYFS to book appointments for uninsured patients with DispatchHealth. Additionally, the VHCD supports a Medical Voucher program operated by VYFS and offering support for a broad range of health-related costs.

National politics injected a new concern for the VHCD, bringing large reductions in actual and projected federal funding for a broad array of health services, and inducing compensatory reactions at the state and county level. The VHCD integrated a robust ongoing review of all levels of health funding changes and their effects on local health care services. This overlay is intended to both inform and shape ongoing strategic planning.

2026 Strategic Plan Update

Overview

The 2026 VHCD Strategic plan is organized under its four strategic pillars, informed by an emergency planning process, and continues the four core strategic priorities:

1. Primary Care Sustainability
2. Urgent Care
3. Behavioral Health
4. Vulnerable Populations (previously referred to as Vulnerable Adults)

The key goals of the ongoing strategic plan are to:

1. Maintain and improve existing projects.
2. Expand services within its core priorities.
3. Develop critical infrastructure for both implementation of strategic priorities and adaptability to a volatile government funding paradigm, including planning for critical service failures.
4. Develop its ability to assess and prioritize needs.
5. Manage and utilize financial resources effectively over the years of 2026-2028 while maintaining a suitable reserve (active and passive) for future strategic planning in a more stable environment.

Proactive infrastructure development is central to the ongoing strategic plan. Enhancing staffing levels, technology updates, re-organization of board and staff processes, improved communication, and prioritizing the MIH expansion project as a means to provide both ongoing stability and adaptability, are key areas of focus.

The rapid growth of the VHCD's projects and the expansion and interconnection of its activities require a more streamlined and reorganized work flow, starting with its core work groups. Rather than organizing work groups simply by strategic priority, the District will adapt to an action-based coordination of activities. The new work flow will include the following work groups:

- Medical Health Services—this will encapsulate both the urgent care services provided by DispatchHealth and the expanded medical services funded through partnership with VIFR's MIH program, as well as any primary care support programs.
- Behavioral Health Services—This will bifurcate therapeutic service programs from those of social work.
- Social Health Services—along with overseeing the growing network of social work funding partnerships, this group will concentrate on services that fall outside the areas of direct medical/behavioral health services, including the voucher and compassionate care programs and other areas, like social determinants of health.
- Finance—this work group will continue to focus on the audit and reporting processes, the annual budget and levy, and cash flow management.
- Outreach—led by the Communications Coordinator, the outreach committee supports the messaging and event-planning needs of the District.
- Strategic Planning—this is a committee of the whole of the Board of Commissioners, facilitated by staff, and organized as needed to review and update strategic planning priorities.
- Governance—another committee of the whole that addresses ongoing policy and governance issues.

Medical Health Services, Behavioral Health Services, Social Services, and Outreach are programming work groups for budgetary purposes. Finance, Strategic Planning, and Governance are operational/admin work groups.

Along with reorganizing work flow, the metrics upon which projects and priorities are assessed are streamlined into three tiers, taken from the strategic pillars:

1. Quality—essentially, the “what, how, and why?”, including measurable deliverables, partnerships and collaborations, and priority of necessity.
2. Access—the “for whom?”, including breadth and depth of access, and ensuring equity.
3. Efficiency—the “how much”, including cost, affordability, and sustainability.

It is recommended that the capital and primary care reserves be consolidated into one emergency reserve. This is comprised of one million dollars of “active” reserves and the unused levy capacity of approximately six hundred thousand dollars in “passive” reserves. Additional existing funds and levy levels will be apportioned on three levels:

- Reserved—funds budgeted within a broad category such as programming contingency, requiring authorization of the Commissioners to allocate or authorize.
- Allocated—funds budgeted in specific programming or operational category that may be authorized by established authority.
- Authorized—funds contracted or authorized specifically either by the Commissioners from reserves or established authority from allocated funds.

The streamlining of contracts is also a necessity, and will, wherever possible, coincide with fiscal (calendar) years. The goal of this strategy is to allow proper time for consideration of budget and levy levels, and to avoid ad hoc short-term extensions.

Programming funding is reserved by strategic priority, allocated by work-group, and authorized by project.

Work Group Priorities

- Medical Health Services—Urgent care, initial MIH expansion care (adding a mid-level provider), and development of future resource infrastructure and planning are key priorities of the Medical Health Services Work Group. Additionally, the group will assess, expand, create, and align projects with the Vulnerable Populations strategic priority.
- Behavioral Health Services—In addition to maintaining and expanding the school-based counselor services for youth, the Behavioral Health Services Work Group will assess, expand, create, and align therapeutic services under both the Behavioral Health and Vulnerable Populations strategic priorities. Emphasis will be placed on strategic partnerships.
- Social Health Service—The expansion and maintenance of social work, navigation, compassionate care, and medical voucher programs, along with facilitating collaboration between District-funded and non-District-funded resources (including needs assessment), are the key areas of focus for the Social Health Services Work Group.
- Outreach—Outreach is tasked primarily with external communications, including messaging and education. In addition to newsletter, website, and social media communications, the Outreach work group will sponsor outreach activities such as health summits, public forums and speaking engagements, commissioner outreach activities, and health fairs and screening events.
- Finance—Ongoing management of cashflow, emergency preparedness, and audit of procedures and financial controls.
- Strategic Planning—Updating and maintaining the current strategic plan.
- Governance—Updating policies, evaluating the Superintendent, and facilitating board education.

2026 Strategic Budget Summary

- Reserved (TBD)

- Allocated (TBD)
- Authorized (TBD)

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