



A Short History

of the Pacific Hospital Preservation and Development Authority


Bridging Gaps in Health Care Access

Who we are:

The mission of the Pacific Hospital Preservation & Development Authority is to champion effective health care for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. The PHPDA works to close gaps in health disparities for the full continuum of health care services.



In 1981 the City of Seattle chartered the PHPDA, placing in its trust the Pacific Hospital and its surrounding campus, a historic Seattle landmark. The PHPDA leases out the property, and lease revenues are used to support charity health care programs in King County.

1933	U.S. Government moves the services of the Marine Hospital from Port Townsend to a newly constructed 312-bed facility on Seattle's Beacon Hill. The new U.S. Marine Hospital serves veterans, merchant seamen, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Light House Service, and "federal compensation cases" (the poor and indigent).	
1951	All U.S. Marine hospitals are redesignated as U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) hospitals.	
1967–1968	The federal government proposes to close PHS hospitals nationwide, but ultimately this proposal is rejected in favor of a major reorganization of the Public Health Service. Washington State Senator Warren Magnuson supports the Partnership for Health Amendment, which authorizes PHS facilities to share their resources with hospitals and other health care providers.	
1970s	The Seattle PHS hospital becomes a model in the PHS system, adopting an "explicit strategy to fill an unoccupied niche in the local health care system." The hospital strengthens relationships with the community clinics and develops and operates jail health and refugee health programs.	
1980	The Seattle PHS hospital is a major resource for the community, with a 76.4 percent occupancy rate and almost 120,000 outpatient visits.	
1981	Threats from the federal government to close the hospital draw more than 300 supporters of the Seattle PHS facility, and protests occur at the Department of Health and Human Services offices in downtown Seattle. In response, the City of Seattle charts the Pacific Hospital Preservation and Development Authority (PHPDA), shifting the hospital from federal to local control.	
1987	The PHPDA closes its hospital doors in June and begins to hospitalize patients at Providence Medical Center, but physicians continue to provide primary and specialty care on the Beacon Hill campus. In November, King County voters approve a regional health bond that provides \$9.3 million for seismic stabilization of the Beacon Hill Tower.	

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PHPDA



1991	The PHPDA signs an Interlocal Agreement with King County, ensuring that the organization will provide health care services to indigent residents of King County for the period of time that the bonds remain outstanding or for 20 years, whichever is longer.
1992	The City of Seattle designates the Beacon Hill campus and Tower as a Seattle Historical Landmark.
1991–1994	The Beacon Hill Tower undergoes seismic stabilization construction for four years. Rather than retrofit the entire structure with new support beams and trusses, the architects decide to build a structure on the north side of the building, creating a buttress to the Tower while also providing additional clinic and office space. When completed, the building receives an honor from the American Institute of Architects for being “utterly responsive to the original building” and “a wonderful seismic solution.”
1998	The PHPDA receives federal approval to lease a portion of the Tower to a non-health care organization. The agreement that grows out of this requires that the PHPDA use 100 percent of all lease revenues to provide charity health care for the poor in King County. The PHPDA then signs a 99-year lease with Wright Runstad, a local real estate development company. In the lease agreement, Wright Runstad commits to upgrades to the Tower, including safety systems and building improvements. Wright Runstad then finds a long-term tenant in Amazon.com.
2002	The PHPDA Governing Council amends its charter, reducing the size of the Governing Council from 15 to nine members and refocusing its mission from administering a group practice to funding charity health care.
2003	The clinical group practice separates from the PHPDA, forming a separate 501(c)3 health care organization, PacMed Clinics (doing business as Pacific Medical Centers). The PHPDA and Pacific Medical Centers sign a contract in which the latter agrees to provide charity health care services in return for a share of the Tower lease revenues until December 2011. The PHPDA agrees to lease office and clinical space to Pacific Medical Centers until 2021. In September, the first PHPDA Executive Director is hired.
2004	The PHPDA and King County amend their Interlocal Agreement to clarify the charity care commitment and reporting requirements. The PHPDA agrees to present quarterly reports of its charity care funding to the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health, and to ensure the provision of a minimum of \$1.5 million in services to the indigent annually. The Seattle Mayor approves the 2002 charter amendment.
2005	The PHPDA provides more than \$1.8 million to underwrite specialty care services for the uninsured and to fund interpreter services.
2006	The PHPDA enters its 25th year and provides start-up funding for King County Project Access, an initiative that encourages donations of specialty health care services to the uninsured by local specialist physicians. In total, PHPDA funding for grants, purchased specialty care and interpreter services is over \$2 million.
2011	The PHPDA completes its obligation to King County under the Interlocal Agreement. The King County bonds are paid off.
2021	The federal government deeds ownership of the Beacon Hill property to the PHPDA.



Museum of History & Industry

The PHPDA Beacon Hill Tower opened in 1933 as a U.S. Marine Hospital.

For more information:

If you are interested in learning more about the Pacific Hospital Preservation & Development Authority, please contact:

Rosemary B. Aragon, MPA
Executive Director
206-325-1357
r.aragon@phpda.org

Mailing Address

1200 12th Ave. S., Quarters 2
Seattle, WA 98144-2726

