Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of Sea Mar Community Health Centers, we are pleased to share with you the 2020 Report to the Community, illustrating Sea Mar’s highlights from the past year.

2020 was a year that tested each of us. From a global pandemic to social unrest, Sea Mar remained committed to serving its patients and its communities. When the pandemic started, our patients were facing new barriers, new struggles and new fears, and we knew they needed us now more than ever. This became our guiding principle as we quickly adapted to ensure we could continue providing services while keeping employees and patients safe. This meant new ways of providing services through telehealth, expanding our testing capacity, and tightening up our PPE, screening and containment processes. Our employees—your frontline healthcare workers—faced new challenges, but through it all they showed resilience and strength, while remaining dedicated to community service. We’ve pushed ourselves as an organization and as individuals to carry out our mantra of exceptional service, every person, every time—even when it wasn’t easy to do so.

Sea Mar remains committed to serving diverse communities, which goes beyond the walls of our clinics. As an organization founded on social justice, we stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement and the disproportionate police brutality toward communities of color. Sea Mar would not be here today without the solidarity of our Chicano/a leaders and Black leaders during the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s. We will always be stronger together. We must stand up against systematic racism, white supremacy, and the historic oppression of Black, Latino/a, and other people of color. We are hopeful the tragic events of 2020, including the killing of George Floyd, lead us to a justice system that truly protects and serves all people equally.

The following pages reflect a year of committed service during a very difficult year for all of us. Sea Mar remains a vital community resource, adapting to the changing health care environment and to the needs of our community. We look forward to continuing to serve our patients, clients and community, now and into the future.
Sea Mar proudly calls Washington state home. Serving over 304,000 patients and clients, our model of care places patients’ needs at the center of attention as we deliver comprehensive health and human services, including medical, dental, behavioral health, preventive health, housing, education, and more.

From the north in Everson to the south in Vancouver, Sea Mar provides services throughout the western part of the state with affordable and quality care. The following pages give a glimpse into the impact and stories that make Sea Mar the passionate organization it is.

*Every pin represents a city where we operate.*
Sea Mar is proud to serve as one of Washington's premier safety net health care systems. We consistently seek to provide quality health and human services to all individuals regardless of ability to pay.

From April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, Sea Mar served:

- **Patients & Clients:** 304,200
- **Encounters:** 1,625,879

### Age

- 0-4: 8%
- 5-12: 13%
- 13-19: 12%
- 20-44: 36%
- 45-64: 22%
- 65+: 8%

### Race/Ethnicity

- Caucasian: 44%
- Latino: 35%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 2%
- Native American/Alaska Native: 1%
- Asian: 4%
- Black/African American: 5%
- Multiracial or Unknown: 9%
- Other: 9%

### Services Provided

- Medical: 23%
- Preventive Health: 12%
- Long Term Care: 2%
- Dental: 15%
- Housing: 5%
- Behavioral Health: 15%
- Other Support Services: 23%
- FPL - Federal Poverty Level

### Income Level

- 100% or Below FPL: 52%
- 101-150% FPL: 19%
- 151-200% FPL: 18%
- Over 200% FPL: 5%
- Unknown FPL: 5%

*FPL - Federal Poverty Level*
As a community-based health organization, it is our mission and responsibility to be on the front lines when patients and clients need us the most. With the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Washington early in the 2020 year, we have seen the virus spread throughout the state and the needs of our communities grow. To respond to the needs of our patients who have been hit first and the hardest, Sea Mar staff—with special recognition to our physicians, nurses, medical assistants, and medical staff—have been the first responders during the COVID-19 crisis. Through the uncertainty and challenges that this pandemic has brought, Sea Mar has been doing its part in keeping our communities healthy.

As the pandemic heightened at the start of spring 2020, new information and state-wide policy changes concerning the virus were being released every day. To address our response to the outbreak in each of our communities across Washington state, Sea Mar formed a special task force called the “COVID-19 Response Team.” Members of the task force met daily to coordinate Sea Mar’s communication, preparedness and response activities amid the ever-changing environment. During these meetings, the task force discussed patient education, staff responsibility, infection control practices, clinical information, and various COVID-19 Response Team projects. With leadership from the task force, Sea Mar has been able to implement the necessary modifications for current services, establish new protocols and services, deliver proper patient education, and develop staffing strategies.

To meet increasing patient needs while still protecting the safety of our communities and staff, Sea Mar continued to provide in-person care throughout the pandemic while also launching new telehealth services and accessible COVID-19 testing.

• Telehealth services offer patients an opportunity to safely receive the care they need in the comfort of their own home. By April 2020, patients were able to do virtual visits for medical and behavioral health services by phone or video-based platform, Zoom. Telehealth services for dental visits by phone were added the following month in May.

• As COVID-19 testing supplies became available late spring, Sea Mar ensured that all 34 medical clinics across the state could offer COVID-19 testing inside the clinic. By the start of summer 2020, Sea Mar launched a community testing program to offer COVID-19 testing via drive-thru and walk-up appointments outside the clinic for the general public. By the end of June, a total of 17 clinics were set up to provide outdoor COVID-19 testing located in Clark, Grays Harbor, King, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom and Thurston counties.
The Sea Mar team is comprised of highly trained, passionate and dedicated professionals committed to community while focused on mission. With a diverse group of staff, Sea Mar is not only able to reach a diverse group of patients, but also provide culturally-sensitive care that meets the needs of each individual client.

Sea Mar understands the barriers Latinos and many other underserved and immigrant groups face because our employees are a part of these communities themselves. Being able to communicate in different languages and/or having similar traditions, beliefs and experiences as our patients has been essential in providing effective care for our communities across WA state, especially this past year amid the pandemic.

By the end of this fiscal year, we employed over 2,700 people, adding to a year of incredible growth.
Jennete was one of the staff members to contract COVID-19 during the earliest days of the pandemic in Bellingham. Ultimately, through a strong desire to get back to caring for her patients, Jennete persevered through her illness and rejoined her team two months later. Since then, Jennete has used her own personal experiences with COVID-19 to help her patients. She feels she “can walk beside them to help them not feel alone”. She describes from her own experience how “even going through the hospital can be very isolating.” As protocols have changed with symptomatic patients entering the clinic through the back entrance and all patients wearing masks, Jennete notes, “it can compound the feelings of trauma that our patients experience.” With her skills as a healthcare worker as well as her personal experience of overcoming the virus, Jennete has been able to identify with her patients and give them some relief. What has inspired her most is a strong desire to care for others, and a deep pride in her team: “I don’t know how we do it but we do it, we are a great team.”

Dr. Okrent is a Sea Mar family physician and medical director in Tacoma. As for many Sea Mar staff organization-wide, being an essential worker during the pandemic has brought Dr. Okrent various new challenges and adjustments. Prior to the outbreak, he noted much of his interactions with patients were using his hands and being close in contact. However, with the coronavirus, he greets patients with limited contact and a full set of personal protective equipment wearing a gown, gloves, mask and face shield. As a way of dealing with the stress of his days and documenting the realities of COVID-19, Dr. Okrent began writing poems, specifically sonnets. “Poetry is the art of attention,” he shares, “And I was looking for a way to pay attention to this time in a way that didn’t just feel completely devastating.” With a toddler at home, he also shared, “I wanted to have something to share with my daughter in the future that would convey to her what this time was like that we went through together.”

March 19, 2020
Home from clinic, I throw my clothes straight in the wash and jump in the shower before I touch my wife and daughter, which means she has to hide her so she doesn’t see me first when I come in. What I bring home with me: mortality and an empty thermos.

Dr. John Okrent
Family Physician & Medical Director

As the Medical Assistant Supervisor at White Center, Elena has been responsible for conducting phone consultations with patients addressing not only their concerns for the virus, but also their economic and social needs. With the challenges of increased anxiety among clients, Elena has felt needed and confident. “It has been an honor to be at the front lines helping our communities,” she said. During her phone consultations with patients, many often shared their worries about paying rent, securing food, or getting a note to work for their employer. Whenever conversations led to these concerns, she was ready to connect them with resources that they may not have known existed. Elena has embraced her added role as community educator, keeping patients informed and directing them to the holistic resources they need on a daily basis. With full knowledge of the risks that comes along with being at the frontlines, Elena shared, “I feel blessed to be here.”

Elena Garcia-Gonzalez
Medical Assistant Supervisor

Enrique describes how strange it was when the pandemic began. The administering of care had to change completely. While it was deeply rewarding for Enrique to be on the front lines, adding “su granito de arena (his grain of sand),” one of the most challenging things was the way the pandemic changed relationships. He explains it was hard at first because everyone saw him differently — while on his lunch break, people would avoid him and look at him with fear. His patients inside the clinic were the same. They were vigilant of all Sea Mar staff, making sure appropriate protocols were being taken. Despite the worry of his family, the stress felt at work during influxes of patients, the scarcity of PPE, and the danger of the virus — Enrique was driven forward by his commitment to being on the front lines. Speaking proudly of his team and role as a medical assistant, “somos los primeros para ver a los pacientes, cuando empieza salir la vacuna, nosotros vamos a ser los primeros que la obtengan y pueden dar a la gente (we are the first to see patients, and when the vaccine starts coming out, we are going to be the first people to have it and give to people).”

Enrique Lavin Escalante
Medical Assistant

Elena Garcia-Gonzalez
Medical Assistant Supervisor

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As Sea Mar’s Infection Control Nurse, Virginia ensures Sea Mar protocols align with the guidelines and recommendations as set by the WA Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). With constant new information being released, Virginia makes sure to do the necessary research to stay up-to-date. “It’s a privilege to be trusted and reached out for advice in regards to COVID-19,” she shares, “This is my responsibility. This is what we train for. It’s been exciting and nerve-racking at the same time.” Virginia has also been working closely with Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Ricardo Jimenez, and county public health jurisdictions for tracking and tracing employees who have been exposed or tested positive. With implementation of strict containment and isolation protocols set at the very start, the Sea Mar employee infection rate has consistently stayed at 1%, which is within the range of the provisional community infection prevalence rate of 2-4%. All positive cases are traced and majority of positive cases have been determined to be acquired from outside of Sea Mar.

Amid the outbreak, Virginia says patients have been anxious and scared due to not having enough information or having misinformation. “That’s what we’re here for – as clinics, nurses, medical assistants, providers – to take care of patients, but also educate them,” Virginia states. “It’s a good opportunity for us to give accurate information since there is so much conflicting information out there. When they leave, patients are more comfortable, appreciative and grateful for the services we provide.”

Virginia Ramos
Infection Control Nurse & Nurse Manager

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, Dr. Perez has not only been on the frontlines battling against the virus, but has also stepped up to be a voice and advocate for the Latino community. In April 2020, Dr. Perez took the initiative to extend his efforts from the clinic and onto the airwaves. He speaks for an hour each Wednesday on Sea Mar’s Spanish language radio station El Rey 1360 FM, filling the gap in public health messaging to our Spanish-speaking communities. As the pandemic unfolded through the summer and data revealed the virus disproportionately affecting the Latino population, Dr. Perez has been invited to speak on several media outlets including KNKX radio, Crosscut, and the Seattle Channel.

In these interviews, he has brought awareness to the unfair treatment of Latinos at the hands of property owners, employers, and the state as well as limited federal aid for those impacted most by the pandemic. Advocating for undocumented immigrants, Dr. Perez explained, “Everyone is afraid that if they take any help whatsoever, it’ll count against them on the public charge, and they won’t be able to apply for citizenship.” In another interview he stated, “Not all of our patients feel like they have a voice…at the end of the [El Rey radio] talks, I say, Venceremos…We will win. We will beat this thing.” Dr. Perez is an example of how one can use their position as a healthcare work to advocate for social justice.

Dr. Julian Perez
Physician
Farmworkers face many barriers to health care, even prior to the pandemic, ranging from long work hours, lack of transportation, work hazards, and migratory status. The majority of almost 30,000 farmworkers in Skagit and Whatcom counties are from Mexico and Guatemala, with a high proportion (60-80%) being indigenous from the rural southern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero. To ensure farmworkers have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services and information, Sea Mar has indigenous-speaking staff in the clinics and recruits indigenous-speaking promotores de salud (health promotors) who are a part of these same communities. By continuing to identify and learn about these communities, the Sea Mar Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Promotores Program is invested in building trust with these communities and committed to finding more ways to better serve their needs.

Manuela García Santos and Jose Alfredo Jimenez share their experiences as farmworkers and patients of Sea Mar as well as how they have navigated the current pandemic:

Manuela García, a single mother of six kids, arrived in the United States 10 years ago and since then has worked for a local farm in Skagit County. She describes how difficult it was when the Promotores first came to talk about COVID-19 and adjust work protocols, especially as everyone was learning new things: how to work with a mask, how to stay safe, how to protect others and keep everyone healthy. She tells the story of when she herself caught COVID-19. She thought for sure she was going to die, worried for her children. She describes how lonely the virus made her feel, having to separate herself from her family to prevent them from contracting the virus. With the support of Sea Mar, prompt testing, and her faith in God, Manuela was able to return to work weeks later and support her family. Having persevered, Manuela wants to give strength to those who may be going through those same feelings of fear and isolation. “A veces uno dice ‘ay, mi vida no vale nada’ pero no, porque en nuestra vida, vale mucho… Puede luchar, salir adelante. Por ayuda de Dios, todo se puede. (Sometimes one may say ‘my life is worthless’ but no, because our life matters a lot. You can fight, keep going. Through God, we can.)”

At the age of 15, Jose Alfredo migrated to the United States, where he worked seasonally in the fields to help support his family financially. He began working at Samson Farms in Skagit County in 2001. After years of hard work and dedication, he became farm manager. He first heard about Sea Mar many years ago when he came down with a cold and his fellow workers told him to go to Sea Mar. When the pandemic first hit, Jose Alfredo shared there was much confusion and many didn’t know what was going on – he and his family included. “Todos estában espantados, logicalmente en la pandemia (we were all frightened, naturally in a pandemic).” He noted when two people in his camp were coughing badly at the start of the outbreak, they were able to get a COVID-19 test at Sea Mar and were thankfully negative. “Whenever someone is sick, we immediately think to go to Sea Mar. (Cada vez que alguien está enfermo, pensamos inmediatamente, ve a Sea Mar.)” As a farm manager, Jose has been an important leader in the fields, helping to keep his coworkers safe and confident during these intense times.

**OUR PATIENTS, THEIR STORY**

**Manuela García Santos and Jose Alfredo Jimenez**

**Farmworkers**

**REVENUE**

$383,599,899

**EXPENSES**

$383,599,899
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- Washington State Health Authority
- Washington State Housing Finance Commission
- Washington Talking Book & Braille Library
- Wave Broadband
- Yakima Neighborhood Health Services
- Yakima Valley Community Foundation
- Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

Thank you to all Sea Mar staff for the sacrifices and hard choices you are making every day in the workplace, at home and within your family as you respond to the needs of our communities. As we continue to collectively experience changes in our daily routines, let us remember we are in this together.