

April 9, 2019

My Dear Patients,

I will be retiring from the full-time practice of medicine, effective September 19, 2019. I came to the Skagit Valley 41 years ago to practice general pediatrics at Skagit Valley Medical Center. Many things have changed since then. The Medical Center at the time consisted of nine physicians and included all but one of the specialists in the Valley. North Cascade Family Practice and Skagit Peds were not yet in existence. Thirty years ago, I decided to change from practicing pediatrics to focusing on the care of asthma and allergy patients. I became board certified as an allergy and asthma specialist and joined the premier allergy practice in the state, Northwest Asthma & Allergy Center (NAAC). The Mount Vernon office was our first full-time satellite clinic and we have expanded to eight full-time satellite offices around the state. Our practice remains the largest allergy specialty practice in the state of WA, and we have a long history of accomplishments with three of my partners serving as the president for national allergy organizations, and a few others serving on the Board of Directors of these organizations.

I will miss my practice, and most of all, I will miss you! It has been a special pleasure to care for several generations of patients, as I now see the children of patients for whom I was their pediatrician. I plan to continue my involvement with the teaching program at the University of Washington and will remain an active member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy, and Immunology for the next 3 years. I plan on working a few days per month at our Everett office location even after I am "retired." I also would like to spend more time and travel with my lovely wife, children, and grandchildren. I may even try to be more serious about my golf game, which is now non-existent!

Unfortunately, we have decided to close our Mt. Vernon clinic. It has been difficult for our group to maintain sufficient providers to satisfy the need for allergy and asthma care in the communities that we serve, in the face of increasing expenses and declining payments. Several of the allergists in the state have retired or joined large healthcare organizations. We have not been able to find someone who would take my place in Mt. Vernon. My retirement means that no allergists certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties are practicing in Island or Skagit County.

I still feel an obligation to ensure that my patients receive optimal allergy and asthma care. As a NAAC patient, your records will continue to be kept by us, and you have the option of seeing one of my partners at our Everett location. If this is not convenient for you, you may consider transferring your care to two groups in Bellingham who do an excellent job of caring for allergy patients: Drs. David Elkayam and Andrew Parker at Bellingham Asthma, Allergy and Immunology and Drs. Sally Newbrough and William Anderson at Peace Health. I've had the distinct pleasure of having helped teach Drs. Newbrough and Parker when they were learning allergy at the University of Washington.

I want to thank all of you for placing your trust in me over the years. I have taken great honor and joy in being able to make changes hopefully for the better in your lives. I will still be around for another six months and would love to see you again and to help you make decisions about your future health care.

Most sincerely,

Paul V. Williams, M.D.