

## OUR VIEW

### New hospital leader takes important role

---

We welcome Nancy Steiger to Whatcom County as chief executive officer of St. Joseph Hospital.

The hospital named her to replace Nancy Bitting, who is retiring. Steiger will start working July 1.

St. Joseph is a vital cog in the health of our community. It is the only hospital in Whatcom County and offers services beyond those typically found at small community hospitals.

The hospital is the place people go to in our community when they have an emergency. And it's also the place where people with no health insurance often go to seek medical attention.

The hospital is also the second largest employer in Whatcom County and the decisions made there have ripple effects throughout our economy. Only Western Washington University has more employees.

Our community faces many healthcare challenges. Being a small community often makes it hard to recruit doctors. And lower than average reimbursement rates from the federal government are pushing some doctors out of our area to other states. Many doctors have stopped taking new Medicare patients altogether.

Our community is also a place where doctors are working together to try to make things better. Groups such as the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access are striving to get healthcare to everyone who needs it and to save money for everyone in the community by lowering the costs of covering the uninsured. It's vital that Steiger have St. Joseph be part of that innovation.