



PeaceHealth

Ketchikan Medical Center

January 22, 2026

This document addresses topics raised by Council Members and the Mayor at the City Council Work Session regarding the lease between the City of Ketchikan and PeaceHealth held on Nov. 25, 2025, at the City Council Chambers. The meeting recording may be found on the City of Ketchikan's website.

*Information presented in this document is intended for the Healthcare Advisory Committee.
Further distribution requires prior authorization from PeaceHealth.*

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center

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Introduction

At the Nov. 25, 2025, City Council work session, City Council Members and the Mayor discussed aspects of the lease agreement between the City of Ketchikan and PeaceHealth. Council Members also inquired about and offered suggestions on topics falling outside of the scope of the lease, including regulatory oversight, escalation pathways, patient relations, caregiver experience and Community Health Board scope.

PeaceHealth is committed to continuous improvement to meet the healthcare needs of our community. Although not comprehensive of ongoing initiatives, this material summarizes key components of work that PeaceHealth is doing as it relates to the lease and other topics that originated at the work session.

Core Services

All Core Services Maintained

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center continues to provide all core services and long-term care services.

While the lease allows PeaceHealth to modify core services and/or long-term care services to reflect operational needs (such as the scope of activities in long-term care, number of providers and availability of diagnostic tests), there has been no material disruption in core services or long-term care services.

PeaceHealth primary care is near capacity, but many non-PeaceHealth clinics offer excellent care and are accepting new patients. These clinics can refer patients to PeaceHealth as needed for care, such as for specialty care. To the extent PeaceHealth clinics and non-PeaceHealth clinics share patients, PeaceHealth uses a shared charting system so non-PeaceHealth providers have access to specialty care information to follow-up with their patients.

CMS Spot Survey of New Horizons

On September 9, 2025, CMS and the State of Alaska completed a spot survey at PeaceHealth New Horizons Transitional Care. As part of keeping the City informed of the survey, also on September 9th, PeaceHealth shared the verbal findings with the City Manager's office. The topic was also discussed at the October Healthcare Advisory Committee meeting.

We are pleased to report that CMS approved our Plan of Correction for the Long-Term Care unit and acknowledged there are no outstanding issues that need to be addressed.

Regulatory Oversight

During the work session, Council Members expressed interest in what oversight exists for PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center. Critical access hospitals (CAHs) like PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center in Alaska and nationally are monitored by many organizations. Below are the main groups that oversee PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center:

State

- State of Alaska Department of Health, Health Facilities Licensing & Certification (HFLC): Oversees healthcare licensing, facility certification, scope of services and quality improvement.
- Alaska Occupational Health and Safety: Oversees workplace injuries, safe patient handling, hazard communication and emergency preparedness.
- State Fire Marshal: Oversees Life Safety Code inspections.

National

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): Certifies CAHs for Medicare and Medicaid participation and enforces federal regulations through surveys.
 - DNV, which stands for Det Norske Veritas: Hospital accreditation service that acts on behalf of CMS to conduct annual surveys for compliance.
- Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Oversees food and nutrition services and some clinical areas.
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA): Oversees aspects of our pharmacy operations.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Oversees, the disposal of pharmaceuticals and other hazardous waste.





Complaint Process & Patient Relations

Patient Complaint and Grievance Process

PeaceHealth is committed to listening to and addressing patient and family concerns. We maintain a formal patient complaint and grievance process that meets all Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements and ensures concerns are reviewed respectfully, thoroughly and fairly.

How to Share a Concern

Patients or family members may raise a concern in several ways, including:

- Submitting a form online at www.peacehealth.org/comment.
- Speaking with any caregiver or clinician.
- Contacting Patient Relations by phone.

What to Expect

Once a concern is received, PeaceHealth follows a standardized process to review, respond to and resolve the issue. This process includes:

- Acknowledging the concern.
- Inviting patient input on potential resolutions.
- Conducting an appropriate review or investigation.
- Identifying opportunities for improvement, when applicable.
- Following up with the patient to share the outcome.

All concerns are documented to support transparency, accountability and patient and caregiver protection.

Oversight and Compliance

PeaceHealth's complaint and grievance process is reviewed annually by DNV on behalf of CMS to confirm ongoing compliance with all applicable regulations.

PeaceHealth values patient feedback and views it as an important opportunity to improve care, safety and the patient experience.

Patient Relations

To improve patient experience, PeaceHealth has a team of Patient Relations specialists to support patients through the complaint and grievance process.

These specialists may not live in the same community as the patient, but this gives them broader experience and neutrality—both of which benefit the patient.

Patient and Caregiver Escalation Pathways

When a patient or caregiver wants to share a **complaint, concern or compliment**, PeaceHealth offers several options, both direct and anonymous. Each method follows a process to document and respond to issues. We also track these reports to identify trends and improve care.

Patient / External

- Online Compliment & Complaint form.
- Contact Patient Financial Services.
- Call to speak with someone directly.
- Provide public comment at a Healthcare Advisory Committee meeting.
- Annual Community Health Board Town Hall.
- Use the PeaceHealth Integrity Line:
 - 877-261-8031

Caregiver / Internal

- Call a Safety Stop.
- Utilize chain of command.
- Document in Safe2Share.
- Use the PeaceHealth Integrity Line.

PeaceHealth promotes a **Just Culture**, which balances accountability with learning. Caregivers are encouraged to speak up about safety concerns so issues can be addressed through a structured process. This approach helps reduce human error by creating clear standards and safeguards.

As it relates to accountability, to provide exceptional care, caregivers must work within their scope of practice. Operating outside that scope—either above or below—can be dangerous and may lead to coaching or performance improvement goals. Accountability should never be mistaken for retaliation. Patient safety is always our top priority.



Behavioral Health

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center is a designated evaluation and stabilization (DES) facility. This means we may receive patients in crisis, voluntarily or brought by emergency services. Patients are evaluated and stabilized until they are discharged with a safe discharge plan or transferred to a more appropriate care setting.

When a patient in mental health crisis arrives at the hospital, an evaluation order is placed. The evaluation happens once the patient is in an unaltered mental state. Patients cannot be evaluated while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Patients are not involuntarily held by any medical facility without a court order. This is for the protection of patient rights.

Evaluations at KMC are currently managed through **Iris Telehealth**, a licensed mental health provider. Iris Telehealth supports patients through evaluation, stabilization and the court process if needed.

Telehealth is recognized by CMS as a method for maintaining comprehensive, 24/7 mental health evaluation coverage. With the departure of other non-PeaceHealth service providers in the community, there are not sufficient local services that accept Medicare and Medicaid to provide 24/7, 365 behavioral health evaluations for both adults and pediatrics.

Community Health Board

PeaceHealth Ketchikan's Community Health Board (CHB) is made up of volunteer community leaders. Like PeaceHealth, the CHB is guided by our Mission, Values and Vision for the organization—that *every person receives safe, compassionate care: every time, every touch.*

CHB Scope

CHB responsibilities include the following:

- Monitoring hospital quality, safety and community health needs, and alignment with Mission.
- Approving medical staff appointments and credentialing.
- Approving medical staff bylaws and governance documents.
- Recommending CHB appointments.

Physician & Clinician Credentialing

The CHB works with PeaceHealth's **Medical Executive Committee (MEC)** to oversee credentialing for physicians and clinicians at KMC. This process helps ensure that clinicians are qualified to provide care at KMC. To be credentialed, applicants undergo a thorough background check. Their clinical qualifications are reviewed by local medical peers who have been trained in rigorous evaluation of clinical skills, prior experience and case logs. The MEC evaluates whether the applicant's experience and expertise meet the criteria established in the medical staff governance documents. The MEC then recommends to the CHB whether to approve each physician and clinician for membership on the medical staff and their exercise of specific clinical privileges at KMC. The CHB reviews the recommendation and votes to grant privileges.

Conclusion

PeaceHealth deeply values our 60+ year partnership with the City of Ketchikan. We seek and expect a robust dialog with the opportunity to address issues as they arise through the avenues outlined in the Lease. We look forward to continuing this partnership long into the future as we collectively care for the health of southern Southeast Alaska.