

We can't lose the Lopez Island Pharmacy

My family and I have filled our prescriptions at Lopez Island Pharmacy for as long as we have lived here. Rick and Marge McCoy's attention to detail, customer service and community spirit makes me proud to be a patron of their pharmacy.

I urge Lopez Islanders to help keep this important island business thriving. Across the country, rural pharmacies are shutting down because of customers using mail order companies for their prescriptions. We cannot let this happen on Lopez. Living on an island makes it so important to maintain the vital services we need for everyday life.

According to the Catherine Washburn Medical Association's "Health Matters" recent newsletter, around 15 years ago insurance companies started offering mail-order pharmacies in order to generate higher profits. While this is sometimes cheaper and more convenient for the customer, it is devastating to small town pharmacies. And Rick and Marge say they are feeling this trend – they've had a decrease in patients.

Another key component to the survival of Lopez Island Pharmacy is for customers to *purchase* items off their shelves like vitamins, bandages etc. Contrary to popular belief, the net profit from pharmaceuticals alone is not high. After the McCoys retire, will the business go on?

For me, it is more important to know your pharmacist and trust they are looking closely at your medical history than it is to save a few dollars.

Next time you need to fill a prescription or buy a toothbrush, please consider what it would be like if we did not have a pharmacy on Lopez.

Michele Smith
Lopez Island