

Hello,

I am writing as a 4th generation Aquidneck Islander, a mother, a healthcare worker who works with pregnant and postpartum moms, and a member of the Community Advisory Panel that was formed by Brown University Health last Fall.

My roots to the birthing center at Newport Hospital are generations deep; my grandmother, mother, myself, and my two children were all born at Newport Hospital. As a pregnant mother, having a small, local, community birthing center with the resources and providers available at Newport Hospital was ideal for me. I was fortunate to have uncomplicated pregnancies, and be able to schedule my prenatal care locally, which allowed little disruption to my routine and work schedule as a physical therapist. My labors were also uncomplicated, but not without challenges, and having the comfort of being familiar with the environment I was laboring in (I had been there several times prior to visit family and friends after the births of their babies), knowing some of the nurses personally, and having a pediatrician from our own office present to welcome our new babies into the community really helped smooth the transition into motherhood. I believe that birthing at Newport Hospital, where you labor, birth, and recover in the same comfortable room, with the same continuous staff of nurses and doctors, is ideal for an uncomplicated birth. The physiologic birth process is dependent on a mother feeling safe, supported, and secure. When we provide mothers with an environment that nurtures those feelings and emotions, it bolsters the health of future generations.

I am a physical therapist who specializes in perinatal pelvic health. I created my business in 2020 after the birth of my second son in 2019. The purpose of my business is to help support the overall health and wellness of moms in our community. Through my work as a pelvic floor physical therapist I have had the honor to collaborate closely in the care of mutual patients with the providers at Newport Women's Health, along with the other women's health clinics in Rhode Island. My work with my local colleagues has helped create a continuum of care outside of the hospital and into the community, to keep moms feeling well, active, healthy, and to complement the vital medical care they receive locally at Newport Hospital.

As a member of the Community Action Panel that was formed by Brown University Health last Fall, I was able to join with other community members, staff and providers from the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center, and members of Brown University Health's leadership to better understand the challenges to maintaining the Birthing Center. We had a chance to recognize that the Birthing Center ranks very highly among other similar-sized birthing centers nationally, is delivering an exceptional level of care, and is a vital part of our local healthcare ecosystem, decompressing Women and Infants Hospital which allows them to keep their services available for high-risk and emergency maternal care in the state. We recommended to Brown University Health's leadership that the Noreen Stonor Drexel birthing center remain open indefinitely, with financial considerations being a major ongoing challenge that BUH has pledged to work towards within their own structure, with state assistance, and with the need for philanthropic efforts as well.

My hope is that we never need to fight to keep maternal care available on Aquidneck Island again. It is abundantly clear through all the efforts made over the last year that the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center at Newport Hospital is vital to the health of mothers in our local community and the Rhode Island healthcare system. If financial cuts need to be made within a healthcare corporation, we cannot allow them to be made to care serving the heart of our communities.

Sincerely,
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