

I'm a retired registered nurse, who worked in the birthing center from 2006 to 2021. I worked night shift for 12 years and day shift for 3 years. The birthing center is a wonderful facility, which provides for women in all walks of life, for all nationalities, to provide a competent setting for a safe and memorable delivery.

I was a nursing instructor for two RI universities and was able to precept nursing students for several years. The unit entertained several other instructors, for several RI universities in the 15 years I was working. My students were pleased to have the opportunity to be on the unit, as there were very few OB clinicals available in the RI.

A few of the nurses I worked with were Childbirth instructors who held classes several times a year for a six weeks

instruction. This included instruction about labor, anesthesia, delivery, potential for cesarean section, breastfeeding, and what to expect postpartum. It has been mentioned that we are a Baby Friendly Unit for 20+ years which helps support breastfeeding.

Another program run through the Birthing Center is the biannual women's cancer screening program, held for underfunded women in the local area who need their yearly mammogram. As a result of the annual screening, several diagnostic mammos were done to help diagnose breast cancer earlier and reduce the risk of a higher stage breast cancer.

There are many times we, as RNs, had to escort laboring patients, or sick patients in the ambulance to Women and Infants Hospital in Providence. Every single patient that were escorted to Providence were

anxious, and they relied heavily on us to help them relax, and treat as needed, during the transport. One situation when the ambulance was diverted because there was backed up traffic on the main thoroughfare, It took an additional 15 minutes to arrive at the tertiary care center. This patient was going to deliver in the ambulance, prematurely, if the alternative road was blocked.

As has been said before, when the bridge is closed, which happened several times during my employment, the alternate way to the closest OB hospital is almost an hour.

Another patient I had, when I picked her up in the emergency department, on the night shift, she said, as I was taking her to the birthing center, she said she has never had an attended delivery. And this was her fifth child. If she had had to go somewhere else

she would have had her baby on the side of the road. Lucky for us we had a midwife, a staff RN, on duty that night who was the one who delivered this woman while the doctor was en route.

Please keep The Newport Hospital Birthing Center open. I have mentioned a few incidences for this, but listen to the locals. They need it to stay open.

Thank you.

Kate West,

Formerly MS, RNC