



[Draft] A Message from Tenny Thomas, MD, President and CMO, Newport Hospital

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**** Sent on behalf of Tenny Thomas, MD, President and CMO, Newport Hospital ****

Update on the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center

April 3, 2026

Dear Brown University Health Leaders,

I am writing to share an important update regarding the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center at Newport Hospital and to provide clarity on our path forward. I'm pleased to share that **the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center will remain open**, following a thorough review, completion of an independent assessment and strong community involvement. However, maintaining this service requires an additional \$4.9M in new and sustained annual revenues that would need to come from increased state funding and/or philanthropic support.

To ensure we could make informed, responsible decisions, we engaged Kaufman Hall to conduct an independent assessment of the Birthing Center to evaluate perinatal quality and safety against national Level I standards. We needed this information to understand what would be required for the program to continue delivering quality care while also remaining financially viable over the long term.

The review found that the Birthing Center delivers safe, quality care supported by strong clinical commitment and 24/7 obstetric, pediatric, and anesthesia coverage. The assessment also identified areas requiring focused attention and additional investment. As a low-volume birthing center in an inherently high-risk environment, it faces challenges related to workforce sustainability, maintaining clinical readiness for high-acuity, low-frequency events, and ensuring ongoing operational reliability.

Based on this work, we now have a clear understanding of what is needed to strengthen and sustain the program.

Throughout this process, we have been committed to transparency and to listening carefully to our community. To ensure we received broad input from a range of perspectives, we convened a Community Advisory Panel, and I am deeply grateful to the panel members for their time, guidance, advocacy, and partnership. I am pleased that the Newport Hospital CAP members apprised of this news are supportive of remaining open while Brown University Health seeks additional state and philanthropic funding.

Increased state funding is essential, not only for the birthing center, but to improving care for people across Rhode Island and maintaining a strong, accessible local healthcare infrastructure. We need your advocacy to secure additional state support so we can protect the future of Rhode Island's healthcare system—and programs like the birthing center—and continue providing the essential care our communities rely on.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to advancing the health and well-being of our community.

With thanks for all you do,

Tenny Thomas, MD
President and CMO, Newport Hospital