



Contact: Amy Blustein, (401) 453-7926

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WOMEN & INFANTS “RE-OPENS” ALTERNATIVE BIRTHING CENTER

Technology and the highest levels of medical intervention and pain management may be what many women want during childbirth. But some families prefer a more natural birthing experience that encourages active family participation.

Women & Infants has offered such an option through the Alternative Birthing Center (ABC), a setting that has been the site of approximately 180 births per year. But for the past six months, ABC births have taken place in a modified labor room, as construction was taking place for a newly-remodeled ABC. On April 6th, that new ABC opened at Women & Infants.

“The ABC is the perfect setting for a family who is motivated for an unmedicated, low-tech birthing experience,” said Linda Nanni, CNM, MS, director of midwifery services at Women’s Care, a private ob/gyn practice. “Women & Infants’ ABC offers the best of both worlds – delivering in a home-like setting within a tertiary care hospital, where a transfer can take place seamlessly, should it be needed.”

The ABC – now located contiguous to Women & Infants’ labor rooms on the second floor of the hospital – has a queen-size bed, comfortable chairs, a rocker, a private bath with a shower, and access to a whirlpool tub for the laboring mother’s relaxation and comfort. A small sitting area is available for the laboring couple and a family waiting area.

Care in the ABC is provided by the family’s certified nurse midwife, obstetrician, and ABC staff nurses. A nurse midwife is a medical professional who has received special education and certification in midwifery and is thoroughly trained to care for women with low-risk pregnancies and to attend uncomplicated births. The primary care team ensures privacy and complete care for both mother and baby.

“The safety of mom and baby are of paramount importance to the family and the hospital,” said James O’Brien, MD, medical director of inpatient obstetrics at Women & Infants. “With that in mind, we do have quite stringent criteria for an ABC delivery. Mothers who experience complications during their pregnancy are not eligible for an ABC delivery, and if certain complications arise after the onset of labor, a mom will be transferred to a traditional labor room. Parents can rest assured that the full medical resources of Women & Infants Hospital are available, should a situation warrant further monitoring or intervention.”

For information about Women & Infants’ Alternative Birthing Center or about classes specifically designed for prospective parents who are planning an ABC delivery, call (401) 274-1122, extension 1830 or visit www.womenandinfants.org. For the name of a midwife or physician on the Women & Infants’ staff, call the Health Line at 1-800-921-9299.

Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, a Care New England hospital, is one of the nation’s

leading specialty hospitals for women and newborns. The primary teaching affiliate of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University for obstetrics, gynecology and newborn pediatrics, Women & Infants is the seventh largest obstetrical service in the country with more than 9,000 deliveries per year. Women & Infants has been designated as a Breast Center of Excellence from the American College of Radiography; a Center for In Vitro Maturation Excellence by SAGE In Vitro Fertilization; and a Neonatal Resource Services Center of Excellence. It is one of the largest and most prestigious research facilities in high risk and normal obstetrics, gynecology and newborn pediatrics in the nation, and is a member of the National Cancer Institute's Gynecologic Oncology Group. The hospital was named Rhode Island's Best Place to Work by *Providence Business News* and a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health by the federal government. For information about Women & Infants, log on to www.womenandinfants.org.