

May 24, 2017

Dear Harrington Family,

On Friday, May 19, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to seek approval from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to close Harrington Hospital's Family Birthing Center. The process involves a 30-day notification period followed by a 90-day transition period that will include a public hearing to solicit community feedback on the closing.

In an effort to provide care locally for our community, we are finalizing an arrangement with UMass Memorial Medical Center that will help to preserve 90% of outpatient pre- and post-natal maternity services and all comprehensive gynecology care within the Harrington network.

Under the agreement, 3 Harrington OB/GYNs will become employees of the UMass Memorial Community Medical Group, Inc. and will join delivery call rotation there. **These providers will continue to manage their current patient panel as well as new obstetrics and gynecology patients at two co-branded satellite offices within the Harrington service area,** with deliveries being performed at the Maternity Center at the Medical Center's Memorial Campus.

As you know, the number of annual deliveries in the Harrington Family Birthing Center has been on a steady decline for many years. Harrington deliveries reached their peak in 2001 and have been steadily declining ever since, with a record low birth count of just 217 deliveries in 2016.

Throughout the 85-year history of the unit, our maternity staff has done an exceptional job of serving those patients who entrusted us with the birth of their child and earned numerous awards for quality and safety, including being named a Blue Distinction Center Plus for Maternity Care by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) for expertise and efficiency in delivering specialty care.

Unfortunately, **even this exceptional record, our low transfer rate and our low C-section rate have not been enough to convince the majority of area mothers to choose Harrington's Family Birthing Center over alternative options at larger city hospitals** with a neonatal intensive care unit and other resources.

A total of 39 administrative and non-physician clinical staff members that work within the Family Birthing Center or Harrington Physician Services practices will be impacted by this transition. We have reached out to affected employees, some of whom have spent their entire career serving Harrington maternity patients, and assured them that we will assist with transition resources and outplacement services with a goal of placement either within Harrington or the UMass Memorial system or another area hospital.

Closing a unit that brings so much joy to area families is an incredibly difficult thing to do and I know you share my sense of loss for what the maternity unit has meant to our community. I hope you will join me in doing everything you can to support affected staff and to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Best regards,



President and CEO