



Our Plan to Ensure Access to Health Resources

UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Leominster Campus, is committed to keeping care in the community after the closure of its inpatient maternity unit on September 23, 2023.

Our decision to close the unit is the result of workforce shortages and declining delivery volume, which impact our ability to operate the unit. Despite years of investing in our maternity services, we will no longer be able to provide appropriate care at all times after September 23, 2023, which poses a risk to patients and newborns. That is why we made the difficult, but medically necessary decision to close the unit.

After the closure, patients will continue to have the option to receive their prenatal and postpartum care from the same local obstetrics and gynecology and family medicine practices as they do now, and we are providing additional resources to support these practices. We will also be providing curb-to-curb transportation around the clock to meet patient needs for non-emergency maternity services. To help support the most vulnerable in North Central Massachusetts, we will also be investing more than \$600,000 to meet patient prenatal and postpartum needs.

PATIENT TRANSPORTATION

We are offering free 24/7/365, curb-to-curb transportation to UMass Memorial Medical Center for birthing people with transportation barriers who are also patients of participating providers in North Central Massachusetts. This service is offered through GoGo, a service that works with companies like Uber and Lyft to provide reliable transportation throughout the day and night. This service is for urgent, non-emergency transportation, and interpreter services are also available. Patients should always call 911 if they need emergency medical services.

EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

Protocols for how Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responds to emergency labor and delivery patient calls will not change with the closure of our inpatient maternity unit. A patient in need of emergency care may be referred to the nearest hospital to provide emergency evaluation or a decision may be made to transport the patient to a hospital with specialized inpatient obstetric care, as is standard practice. A patient in labor may also be approved for transportation to another hospital if they are stable and there is no risk of endangering the birthing patient or the fetus.

Very few deliveries require emergency transportation. This means that the closure of the inpatient maternity unit will have little to no impact on EMS. We have been in regular communication with EMS providers, as well as local fire and police services, to discuss the potential impacts of this closure and will continue to work with them to collect and review data to mitigate any issues that may arise.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Emergency Department at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, which was extensively renovated in 2020, can handle any increase in patient volume that may occur with the closure of the inpatient maternity unit. Our emergency medicine staff are trained in handling obstetric emergencies and will receive additional training to supplement their existing expertise. This will include trainings in neonatal care, fetal assessment, simulation with obstetric emergency equipment and procedures, and emergency response drills with all appropriate staff.

CAPACITY AT OTHER BIRTHING CENTERS

The birthing units at UMass Memorial Medical Center (Medical Center), Emerson Hospital, Heywood Hospital, and St. Vincent Hospital have the space and staffing to accept new patients after the closure of our unit. Letters have been made available to participating local providers to ensure patients are aware of alternative labor and delivery sites in the area.

The Medical Center's maternity unit alone can take all the delivery volume that currently occurs at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital each year. The Medical Center has also taken steps to increase the number of labor and delivery staff with a fully staffed pool of registered nurses; assigned additional clinician and advanced practice providers to improve efficiency in triage and postpartum care; and will be enhancing high-risk Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) coverage to include a dedicated MFM subspecialist who, among other things, will support our antenatal testing service, and provide continuity for high-risk pregnant and postpartum patients.

The Medical Center also has a history of actively welcoming and serving diverse patients and communities of color. Patients will have access to a comprehensive Language Access program and 24/7 Interpreter Services that will help meet their cultural and linguistic needs while receiving care at the Medical Center.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

HealthAlliance-Clinton is a strong, stable and successful organization that is continually assessing community need and investing in services that support the health needs of our patients. Over the past few years, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Leominster campus, has invested in state-of-the-art health services to keep care in the community and meet current patient needs.

- These investments include the establishment of a new Emergency Department, a new Diabetes Center at the Fitchburg Family Practice, and new Multidisciplinary Clinic space, as well as a new Cancer Center and Wellness Center.

- This year, we launched an Extended Care Unit that cares for medically complex ventilated patients.
- We will also be offering a Sports Medicine program in the fall that brings UMass Memorial Health specialists to Leominster.

Our commitment to our patients and the communities we serve extends beyond the walls of our facilities. Through Determination of Need funding, we have distributed 25 grants to community organizations. To date, more than \$1.4 million of \$2.35 million allocated for community investment has been distributed to address existing community health priorities.

We are also currently in the process of evaluating community need and conducting resource gap analyses to inform our community investment strategy and to ensure that health equity is fundamentally prioritized. This evaluation will shape our commitment to invest nearly \$600,000 in women's health through improving access and enhancing resources supporting pre- and post-natal care for mothers, birthing people, and infants.

We are tailoring our needs assessment to focus on various at-risk populations, such as low-income individuals; BIPOC individuals; disabled individuals; individuals with substance use disorders; LGBTQIA+ individuals; and others. We have engaged Health Resources in Action (HRIA) to facilitate and support this evaluation and data collection effort as a trusted third party. Our efforts will seek to support the service area of HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Leominster campus, which includes Ashburnham, Ashby, Bolton, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Harvard, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, Princeton, Sterling, Townsend, and Westminster.