



CIMS
COALITION FOR IMPROVING
MATERNITY SERVICES

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Dec. 2, 2008

Ms. Nancy Palmer, Chairman of the Board
Northeast Health Corporation's Board of Trustees
C/o Mary Ellen Lear, Secretary
Beverly Hospital
85 Herrick Street
Beverly, MA 01915

Dear Ms. Palmer and Members of the Board of Trustees:

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) is pleased that the Board of Trustees has decided to postpone their decision to institute a policy that would mandate all low-risk pregnant women to give birth at Beverly Hospital instead of the North Shore Birth Center. CIMS supports the Campaign to Save the North Shore Birth Center. Giving women the choice to labor at the Birth Center lowers their risks for complications and cesarean section. It also increases their likelihood to initiate and establish breastfeeding.

By providing healthy expectant women and their families the choice to give birth at the North Shore Birth Center, the Board of Trustees has in fact been providing evidence-based maternity care -- a model of care that supports the best health outcomes for mothers and infants and avoids potential for harm from the ineffective but routine use of medical interventions.

Care in birth centers supports the physiological process of childbirth, which the recently published Milbank Report, Evidence-Based Care: What It is and What It Can Achieve recommends as the safest form of care for healthy pregnant women. Healthy women who give birth in a birth center are less likely to be induced, have an amniotomy, have an IV, use pharmacological pain relief including epidurals, and less likely to have continuous electronic fetal monitoring. They are also more likely to initiate and successfully establish breastfeeding. Current research indicates that the routine use of medical interventions for low-risk women including continuous electronic fetal monitoring, does not improve health outcomes, but does increase the risk for a cesarean delivery.

Currently, about one in three women at Beverly Hospital give birth by cesarean section. As current evidence indicates a cesarean delivery increases the risks for maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality even for elective scheduled cesareans performed on healthy women. The low-risk patients of the North Shore Birth Center who may be mandated to give birth on the labor and delivery unit of Beverly Hospital in the future are more likely to increase their exposure to potentially harmful routine interventions and cesarean delivery.

CIMS Leadership Team

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Making Mother-Friendly Care A Reality

CIMS is a not-for-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Our mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs.

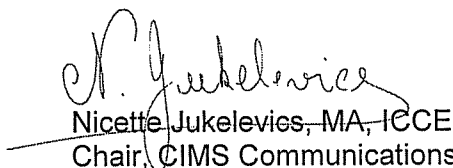
The North Shore Birth Center support community is asking the Board of Trustees to continue to give healthy women a choice of where they want to give birth. The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services strongly believe that if their request is granted the Northeast Health Corporation's Board of Trustees would ultimately also be making the right choice- to provide this group of women and their babies with the safest medical care. We hope that the Board will continue to explore all available options to allow healthy women to give birth at the North Shore Birth Center. If CIMS can be of service, we would be honored to be included in that process.

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) is a coalition of individuals and national organizations with concern for the care and well-being of mothers, babies, and families. Our mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs. This evidence-based mother-, baby-, and family-friendly model focuses on prevention and wellness as the alternatives to high-cost screening, diagnosis, and treatment programs.

Respectfully on behalf of the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services Leadership Team,



Michelle Kendall, MBA
CIMS Co-Chair



Nicette Jukelevics, MA, ICCE
Chair, CIMS Communications Committee

cc. Henry J. Ramini, MD, Interim CEO, Northeast Health System, North Shore Birth Center
Rebecca Hains, Steering Committee, Campaign to Save the North Shore Birth Center

References

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