

To Our Lamoille Community,

We, the undersigned, have learned that Copley Hospital's leadership has proposed closing its Birthing Center and eliminating all pregnancy care and births here in order to cut costs. We feel that the public has a right to know about this potential plan, given the impact it could have on our community.

While the financial crisis facing Vermont hospitals is real, eliminating this essential service would be a betrayal of Copley's mission to promote the wellness of our community. Families come to Copley from all parts of Lamoille County and beyond for prenatal and birth care. If Copley were to eliminate the Birthing Center, as is currently being considered, these families would have to travel to Burlington, Barre, or further for care. The cost in time and money to get regular prenatal care would be steep for many local families. Without regular, high-quality prenatal care, many birth complications can go unchecked. And without a safe place to give birth, Lamoille County will lose more young families who are key to our future.

We know there is a crisis in maternity care in America. Despite our wealth as a country, our rates of maternal and neonatal mortality are much higher than many other industrialized nations. Many factors drive this poor showing, but chief among them is lack of access to high quality and consistent prenatal care. Copley has excellent maternal and newborn outcomes, which is another reason it would be tragic to lose this program.

The financial problems in healthcare will be hard to solve. Tough choices lie ahead for all of our healthcare institutions. But we need to resist the moral bankruptcy of cutting needed services and putting the health of Vermonters in jeopardy to shortsightedly reduce costs. Eliminating our Birthing Center will ultimately hurt the future of Copley Hospital and our community. It is shortsighted at best, and dangerous at worst.

If you feel similarly, please let Copley's administration know your thoughts on the matter. They can be reached through the Copley website or by phone at 802-888-8888.

Thank you,

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