

RESOLUTION

Advocating for Continued Operation of the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center at
Newport Hospital

- WHEREAS: Healthcare providers across the State, including Brown Health, are facing substantial budget shortfalls that are requiring the consideration of cuts to programs and services, and
- WHEREAS: Newport Hospital is now part of Brown Health, and has served as a cornerstone of healthcare for the residents of Middletown and the greater Aquidneck Island community for over a century, and
- WHEREAS: Newport Hospital is welcoming a new Chief Executive Officer, who now faces the critical challenge of advocating for the preservation of essential healthcare services at a time when Brown Health is confronting systemwide budget constraints, and
- WHEREAS: The Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center ("Birthing Center") at Newport Hospital provides essential maternal and newborn care to families in Newport County and surrounding areas, and
- WHEREAS: Newport Hospital's Birthing Center is staffed by dedicated healthcare professionals who provide high-quality, compassionate care and contribute to the overall strength and well-being of the Middletown community, and
- WHEREAS: This full continuum of care has been built up over decades of investment by the Hospital and community, and would be extremely difficult to replicate or rebuild if eliminated, and
- WHEREAS: Access to local obstetric and maternal healthcare is critical for ensuring safe pregnancies, timely deliveries, and reducing maternal and infant health risks. Maintaining local birthing services aligns with the principles of equitable healthcare access, community wellness, and public health best practices, and
- WHEREAS: Closure of the Birthing Center would require expectant mothers to travel significantly farther to access delivery services, which could pose serious risks in emergency situations and present undue hardship on families with limited transportation options. Ongoing road and bridge construction across the State makes this hardship particularly challenging, and
- WHEREAS: Such a closure would also place added demand on the Town of Middletown's Fire and Rescue Department, whose personnel and ambulances may be increasingly called upon to transport expectant mothers to off-island hospitals, potentially during time-sensitive and medically urgent situations, and
- WHEREAS: This increased demand could strain the Town's emergency response capacity, divert resources from other critical incidents, and increase response times for the broader community, and
- WHEREAS: The Town Council of the Town of Middletown recognizes the widespread community concern regarding the potential closure and believes it is in the best interest of all residents to preserve local maternal healthcare services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED: That the Town Council strongly urges Brown Health and the leadership of Newport Hospital to maintain the full operation of the Birthing Center.

BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: That the Town Council respectfully calls upon state and federal officials, healthcare stakeholders, and the broader community to support efforts ensuring the continued availability of local obstetric and maternity care.

BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: That the Town of Middletown stands ready to work as a partner with Brown Health, Newport Hospital, state and federal agencies, and community stakeholders to explore and support sustainable solutions that will keep the Birthing Center open.

BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be sent to Brown Health leadership, the President of Newport Hospital, Newport Hospital's Foundation Boards, the Governor of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Health, Newport County State Legislators, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, and the City and Town Councils of Jamestown, Newport, and Portsmouth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the Town of Middletown to be affixed this 4th Day of August A.D. 2025.

Paul M. Rodrigues
Paul M. Rodrigues, President
Middletown Town Council

Thomas P. Welch, III
Thomas P. Welch, III
Councillor

Peter D. Connerton, Sr.
Peter D. Connerton, Sr.
Councillor

Christopher M. Logan
Christopher M. Logan
Councillor

Charles R. Roberts
Charles R. Roberts
Councillor

Dennis B. Turano
Dennis B. Turano
Councillor

Barbara A. VonVillas
Barbara A. VonVillas
Councillor

August 4, 2025

READ AND PASSED IN COUNCIL

Wendy J. W. Marshall
Wendy J. W. Marshall, MMC
Town Clerk