

**THE CITY OF NEWPORT**

**RESOLUTION**

**OF THE**

**COUNCIL**

**No.2025-119**

***Advocating for the Continued Operation of the Noreen Stonor Drexel  
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 Newport 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 Newport 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 City of Newport'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 City's emergency response capacity, divert resources from other critical incidents, and increase response times for the broader community; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Newport 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 City Council strongly urges Brown Health and the leadership of Newport Hospital to maintain the full operation of the Birthing Center; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That the City 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; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That the City of Newport 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; AND 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 Town Councils of Jamestown, Middletown, and Portsmouth.

XAY KHAMSYVORAVONG  
JEANNE-MARIE NAPOLITANO  
STEPHANIE SMYTH  
ELLEN PINNOCK  
DAVID R. CARLIN, III  
LYNN UNDERWOOD CEGLIE

IN COUNCIL  
READ AND PASSED  
**JULY 15, 2025**



LAURA C. SWISTAK, CMC  
CITY CLERK