

Advanced Birth Centers

HB 383 – Rep. Colleen Burton
HB 25 – Rep. Cyndi Stevenson
SB 448 – Sen. Gayle Harrell

FHA Position

The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) opposes the creation of advanced birth centers. FHA recommends that advanced birth centers be co-located with a hospital to ensure rapid, quality responses to maternal and newborn emergencies that can arise even in deliveries considered to be low risk for complications. Highly specialized staff and facilities must be accessible within minutes of life-threatening emergencies.

Oppose the
creation of
Advanced Birth
Centers.

Background

The United States (U.S.) has the highest rate of maternal mortality in the developed world, with U.S. mothers more likely to die from childbirth or pregnancy-related causes than other women. The U.S. maternal mortality increased 250 percent between 1987 and 2014 and has garnered the attention of health care providers, research and advocacy organizations, the Florida Department of Health, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and most recently, Congress.

Florida's 2017-2021 State Health Improvement Plan highlights maternal mortality as one of the most important health issues affecting Floridians. In addition, Congress passed legislation aimed at reducing the maternal mortality rate in 2018, and the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee sent inquiries to healthcare providers nationwide requesting information on efforts to reduce maternal mortality.

Of the estimated 700 maternal deaths occurring annually in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control estimates that 60 percent are preventable. In fact, the Florida Department of Health's Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review identified post-partum hemorrhage, embolism and hypertension as the leading causes of maternal mortality.

Any childbirth can become high-risk during labor and delivery. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 10 percent of newborns require some level of neonatal resuscitation at birth and one percent require extensive resuscitative measures to survive. A recent American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology study states at least one unexpected complication was indicated on the birth certificate for 46 percent of all pregnancies.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist (ACOG) Levels of Maternal Care classification system does not provide recommendations for "Advanced Birth Center" facilities. ACOG has established levels of maternal care for birth centers and those recommendations do not include patients, complications or procedures deemed high risk, such as delivering babies in breech presentation, multiple births and cesarean sections.

FHA recommends that advanced birth centers be co-located with a hospital to ensure rapid, quality responses to maternal and newborn emergencies that can arise even in deliveries considered to be low risk for complications. Highly specialized staff and facilities must be accessible within minutes of a life-threatening emergency.

1. *Obstetric (OB) Care Consensus; Developed jointly by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, February 2015 / Reaffirmed 2016*
2. *Post-Partum Hemorrhage; John R. Smith, MD, FACOG, FRCSC, Physician in Maternal-Fetal Medicine, July 21, 2017*
3. *Unexpected complications of low-risk pregnancies in the US; Valery A. Danilack, MPH, PhD, et al, Am J Obstet Gynecol, June 2015*
4. *Textbook of Neonatal Resuscitation; American Academy of Pediatrics; Module 7: Delivery and Immediate Neonatal Care*
5. *"Pregnancy Related Deaths"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Reproductive Health, November 2017*