

# Closure of Labor & Delivery Services

## Frequently asked questions

### Why will Bonner General Health no longer be providing childbirth services?

**Loss of Pediatrician coverage** - Without pediatrician coverage to manage neonatal resuscitations and perinatal care, it is unsafe and unethical to offer routine Labor and Delivery services; despite our best efforts over months of negotiations. In May, our inpatient pediatric services will no longer be consistent and reliable. BGH has reached out to other active and retired providers in the community requesting assistance with pediatric call coverage with no long-term sustainable solutions. Our low patient volume is insufficient to attract candidates for pediatric hospitalists, and we cannot afford to continue having locum tenens physicians.

**Volumes and changing demographics** – The number of deliveries at BGH has continued to decrease yearly. We delivered 265 babies in 2022 and admitted less than ten pediatric patients for other reasons. There are many reasons, including a nationwide decrease in births, an older population moving to Bonner County, and Kootenai Health having a new, updated unit with Neonatologists and OBs in-house 24/7.

**Idaho's legal and political climate** - Highly respected, talented physicians are leaving. Recruiting replacements will be extraordinarily difficult. In addition, the Idaho Legislature continues to introduce and pass bills that criminalize physicians for medical care nationally recognized as the standard of care. Consequences for Idaho Physicians providing the standard of care may include civil litigation and criminal prosecution, leading to jail time or fines.

This decision allows mothers to access the best care to deliver their babies. There is a coordinated plan to ensure that patients can safely have their babies at Kootenai Health or a hospital of their choice.

## Will Bonner General Health continue to offer prenatal and postpartum care?

No; however, Sandpoint Women's Health will continue offering women's health services. Expecting mothers and the Sandpoint Women's Health team will coordinate their delivery at either Kootenai Health or a hospital of their choosing.

## Can mothers deliver at Bonner General in an emergency?

The Bonner General Emergency Department continues to be open and available 24/7 for anyone requiring emergency care.

## Where can women in Bonner County and surrounding areas deliver their babies?

The patient and the obstetrician decide where to have their baby. Here is a link to our OB referral list.

## Will any staff lose their jobs due to the transition of services?

All Labor and Delivery staff will have opportunities to work in other departments in the hospital.

## Is Bonner General Hospital closing?

No, Bonner General Health is not closing.