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# Nurse Midwives Say: "People Want A Birth Center in Lane County"

By [TIFFANY ECKERT \(/PEOPLE/TIFFANY-ECKERT\)](#) • FEB 18, 2020

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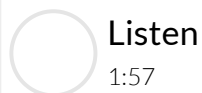
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When PeaceHealth closed its Birth Center in Springfield last August, it left a gap in services for women. Now, a group of midwives plan to open a new free-standing center.



AlexAnn Westlake is a certified nurse midwife who spearheaded the effort to create Our Community Birth Center. She says the reason is simple: improved birth outcomes.

“There’s a study called *Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns* and the results were published in 2018,” says Westlake. “It showed lower rates of C-sections, fewer pre-term births, fewer low-birth weight babies and a lower cost to the health care system when families used birth centers.”

That study specifically includes data from Lane County.

Westlake says they are chipping away at a \$775,000 fundraising goal. She adds a lot of financial support is coming from area health care providers. The midwives are shopping around for a location, preferably one in Springfield. The hope is to open a new birth center in Fall of 2020.



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*A baby revisits the Birth Center bed he was born on. The wood beds from the former PeaceHealth Birth Center have been saved and will be used in the new Our Community Birth Center.*

CREDIT LEAH SIKORA MOORE



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*Leah Sikora Moore is an advocate of birth center options in Lane County.*

CREDIT LEAH SIKORA MOORE

Westlake says Our Community Birth Center will accept health insurance including Medicaid. As a non-profit, she says they will be able to help families offset costs not covered by insurance.

Leah Sikora-Moore is a Eugene-Springfield area business owner and a Birth Center mom. She says the midwifery-centered model of care should be a part of the national health care conversation.

“Who pays for health care and how much? Lots and lots and lots of people give birth,” says Sikora-Moore. “I think it would make a huge impact.”

Sikora-Moore says the cozy, homelike environment of a birth center makes labor and delivery a more natural, bearable process. When envisioning the new birth center, Sikora-Moore sees warm lighting and big, comfortable beds.

Westlake says the midwives were able to save the decades-old, wooden beds from the PeaceHealth Birth Center (before it was shuttered last summer.) If all goes as planned, they will be used in Our Community Birth Center for an expected “100 births per year,” says Westlake.

<http://www.ourcommunitybirthcenter.org>  
(<http://www.ourcommunitybirthcenter.org>)

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*AlexAnn Westlake is a certified nurse midwife, seen here after catching a baby at the Birth Center. She is now Executive Director of Our Community Birth Center.*

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