

CONFLUENCE HEALTH CELEBRATES START OF TEAMBIRTH PROGRAM TO IMPROVE MATERNITY CARE

Wenatchee, WA: On Wednesday, October 25th, Confluence Health staff in the mother-baby unit and guests from Ariadne Labs celebrated the kickoff of a new maternity care program – TeamBirth – with a small gathering to reflect on the efforts to bring this important program to life, and to finally meet face-to-face with those they had long collaborated with on Zoom calls. With the kickoff, Confluence Health Hospital Central Campus becomes one of the first 15 hospitals in Washington State to participate in the TeamBirth maternity program. TeamBirth improves care by ensuring people giving birth, and the clinicians caring for them, have shared input and understanding during the delivery of care. TeamBirth was developed by Ariadne Labs, a joint center for health systems innovation at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

“The event yesterday to kick off our TeamBirth quality improvement process was a big success,” remarked Barb Lawson, director of obstetrics at Confluence Health Hospital Central Campus. “A team of four staff nurses and our mother-baby unit (MBU) leadership, along with Dr. Rita Hsu, have been meeting for the past several months planning events and education for patients, providers, and MBU staff. This has been such a fun and rewarding experience. At the event nurses reported on successful huddles where the birthing person, their support person, providers, and nurses were able to share in the planning process, honoring the patient preferences to achieve the best possible experience for the patient, their baby, and family.”

The program calls for team huddles – which are collaborative discussions between stakeholders – at key decision points throughout the hospital stay. Huddles happen on admission to the hospital, with any changes to the patient or child’s condition, when decisions are made surrounding delivery, and any time the patient or a team member requests a huddle.

The huddle aspect of TeamBirth ensures that everyone involved in the birthing process is on the same page. The person giving birth – alongside any caregivers who are not part of hospital staff, such as doulas, spouses, parents of the expecting person, and others – convene with the labor and delivery staff to go over a birthing plan and any desires or expectations of the person giving birth. This ensures shared decision-making between the new parent and hospital staff in case of any unexpected changes to the delivery plan.

“As we evaluate this new process, patients are given a voluntary anonymous survey to fill out before discharge asking about their TeamBirth experience,” continued Lawson. “Recent survey results show improvement in communication and the patient experience.”

The rollout of the TeamBirth program is a joint venture between the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) and Massachusetts-based Ariadne Labs, supported with funding by Ballmer Group. WSHA will roll out TeamBirth to birthing hospitals in Washington in four cohorts, with a goal of reaching 100 percent program adoption in the state.

The 15 hospitals participating in the first cohort include:

- Cascade Valley Hospital
- Confluence Health Hospital Central Campus
- Coulee Medical Center

- EvergreenHealth
- Overlake Medical Center
- Providence Centralia Hospital
- Providence Holy Family Hospital
- Providence Regional Medical Center Everett
- Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center
- Providence St. Peter Hospital
- Swedish Edmonds
- Swedish First Hill
- Swedish Issaquah
- Virginia Mason Franciscan Health: St. Francis Hospital
- Virginia Mason Franciscan Medical Center (Seattle)

“We are excited to be one of the first states in the country to implement TeamBirth. Our hospitals are committed to those giving birth having the best possible experience in the hospital bringing their new child into the world,” WSHA CEO Cassie Sauer said. “Giving birth is such a special moment of life. The implementation of this program creates clear avenues of communication to keep everyone on the same page, and to keep the expecting parent an active participant in their health care.”

At the gathering celebrating the start of the new program, staff involved in the rollout sported special badge holders prepared and designed by the unit-based educator, Laura Johnson, to celebrate the launch and shared the impact the new process had already had on the care they provided with the visiting representatives from Ariadne Labs. Many talked about the improved communication and outcomes, the ability to provide more personalized care and collaboration, and how the program’s huddles encouraged all involved in the birth process to openly talk about what was needed and their expectations to make the experience the best possible.

“Our mother-baby team looks forward to introducing TeamBirth to our patients on our birthing unit,” commented Dr. Rita Hsu, women’s health service line medical director at Confluence Health. “The goals of our project include a transparent way for all involved – birth parents, families, nursing, physicians, birth professionals – to communicate. We all share the same goals of smooth and safe birth process and joyful birth experience. TeamBirth offers all involved opportunities to share their priorities and to work together towards our shared goals.”

About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence Health is one of only two locally-lead healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

About the Washington State Hospital Association

The Washington State Hospital Association advocates for and provides value to members in achieving their missions and improving the health of their communities. WSHA represents more than 100 hospitals and health systems in the state, including those that are non-profit, investor-owned, and county, state and military hospitals. The Quadruple Aim guides our members and our work as we strive to reduce the cost of health care and improve the patient experience, the clinician experience and the health of our communities. Visit www.wsha.org for more information.

About Ballmer Group

Ballmer Group is committed to improving economic mobility for children and families in the United States, funding leaders and organizations that have demonstrated the ability to reshape opportunity and reduce systemic inequities. We focus on multiple impact areas and systems that can impact economic mobility - such as early learning, K-12 education, college and career pathways, housing, behavioral health, and criminal justice - and we support leaders and organizations that focus on undoing systemic racism and the barriers it has created. Ballmer Group is both a national and regional funder – we have a presence and invest deeply in southeast Michigan, Washington state, and Los Angeles County. Ballmer Group was co-founded by philanthropist Connie Ballmer and her husband Steve Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft, founder of USAFacts, and chairman of the Los Angeles Clippers. Learn more at www.ballmergroup.org.

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