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## Bridging the Gap: A Resource Guide for Pregnant Patients and Newborns in Lamoille County

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# Bridging the Gap: A Resource Guide for Pregnant Patients and Newborns in Lamoille County

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HOST CLINIC: LAMOILLE HEALTH PARTNERS, MORRISVILLE, VT

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PROJECT MENTOR: KATIE MARVIN, MD

# Problem Identification

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Since the closure of the Copley Birthing Center on November 1, 2025, Lamoille County has been without a birthing center. Patients thus need to travel outside of the county for childbirth as well as prenatal and postpartum care.

As a result of the closure, 14 full-time staffers, including midwives, birthing center nurses, the on-call pediatrician, and family medicine providers doing pediatric call, were laid off, meaning that they are no longer available to consult on cases involving pregnant people, newborns, or infants who present to the Copley Hospital Emergency Room.<sup>1</sup>

This closure, in combination with the 2022 closure of Planned Parenthood in Hyde Park,<sup>2</sup> has rendered Lamoille County a maternal care desert,<sup>1,3</sup> with many patients needing to drive an hour away for care.

In light of these issues, the objective of this project was to identify and publicize local resources that have remained available to Lamoille County families to bridge gaps in care.

AHEC Focus Areas: Connecting Communities & Supporting Health Professionals/Community Health Workers, Social Determinants of Health, Medical Practice Transformation

# Public Health Cost

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Because of the closure of the Copley Birthing Center, pregnant patients must travel to other local hospitals for care, all of which are about an hour away from Copley Hospital (per commercially available navigation technology):

- UVMMC (Burlington): 59 minutes, 45 miles
- CVMC (Berlin): 48 minutes, 35 miles
- North Country Hospital (Newport): 1 hr 3 mins, 44 miles
- Northwestern Medical Center (St. Albans): 57 minutes, 40 miles
- Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (St. Johnsbury): 57 minutes, 41 miles

In addition to creating logistical and financial barriers for families, traveling distances such as these has been shown to increase the risk of adverse maternal outcomes [adjusted relative risk (aRR) 1.22 for 60 km (37 mi); 1.36 for 70 km (43 mi); and 1.53 for 80 km (50 mi)] and NICU admissions [aRR 1.70 for 60 km (37 mi); 1.96 for 70 km (43 mi); and 2.25 for 80 km (50 mi)].<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, and unfortunately, residing in a maternal care desert is also significantly associated with increased rates of maternal and pregnancy-related mortality, with adjusted incidence rate ratios of 1.36 and 1.26, respectively, compared to full-access counties.<sup>5</sup>

# Community Perspectives

QUOTES:

**“The complexity of it is unbelievable [...] We can’t offer what we should be able to – which is the safety of their baby.”**

**- Annie Price, RN, CLC, CBC**

Maternal Child Health Nurse for Lamoille Home Health and Hospice

- This issue is huge and far-reaching.
- Without the birthing center, care no longer feels community-based.
- Families are “desperate” not to have to drive to Burlington.
- A recent anecdote: a woman who was 32 weeks pregnant developed bleeding on a Friday. Because she had no transportation available over the weekend, she did not call a provider for an evaluation until Monday.

**“We have more referrals coming in from UVM since the Birthing Center shut down [...] People are going there to give birth and then coming back to this area.”**

**-Jenn Holten-Clapp**

Chief Operating Officer, Lamoille Home Health and Hospice

- Care coordination has become a bigger challenge since the closure of the Birthing Center.
- Other resources, such as food, transportation, and housing, are also in high demand in Lamoille County.
- The Birthing Center gave many of their resources to Vicki Rich, the owner of Lactation and Birthing Solutions.

**“The combination of losing the birthing center and prenatal care at the Women’s Center is extremely detrimental [...] Folks are feeling lost in limbo.”**

**- Staff Member at**

Lamoille Family Center

- Transportation has always been a challenge in this region.
- With the closure of the Birthing Center, there’s much more of an emphasis on home visits.
- The closure is having a significant impact on people with incredibly complex medical needs.
- A goal of the Lamoille Family Center is to support people in knowing what resources are available.

OTHER  
INTERVIEW  
TAKEAWAYS:

# Intervention and Methodology for Implementation

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- An informational document (shown on next slide) containing a list of resources, organized both by issue and by service provider, was created to be distributed in physical form at Lamoille Health Partners in Morrisville and electronically to providers throughout Lamoille County to share with their patient populations.
- The physical version of the document contains a QR code which allows people to access an electronic version of the document containing links to relevant websites.

# Pregnant or a new parent?

LAMOILLE COUNTY HAS RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU!

Contact information on next page

## Pregnancy Confirmation

Pregnancy tests are available at:

- The Copley Women's Center
- Johnson Health Center
- Lamoille Health Partners [LHP] (Morrisville and Cambridge)
- Hardwick Area Health Center
- Tamarack Family Medicine
- Lamoille Valley Pregnancy Resource Center

## Newborn Care

The following local practices accept newborns:

- LHP Pediatrics
- Lamoille Health Family Medicine – Morrisville
- Lamoille Health Family Medicine – Cambridge
- Tamarack Family Medicine
- Hardwick Area Health Center

## Home Baby Checks

For baby checks, including blood draws, contact:

- Lamoille Home Health and Hospice
- Lamoille Family Center
- Lactation and Birthing Solutions

## Hearing Screens

Hearing screens are available through:

- Copley Hospital (referral through baby's doctor)
- Lamoille Family Center
- Lamoille Home Health and Hospice

## Phototherapy

Babies with jaundice may be able to get phototherapy at home. Contact Lamoille Home Health and Hospice (point person is Annie Price, RN).

## Lactation Support

For support with breastfeeding, contact:

- Lactation and Birthing Solutions
- Lamoille Home Health and Hospice
- Lamoille Family Center
- WIC

## Car Seat Fitting

Car seat fitting is available through:

- Lamoille Family Center (appointments required)
- Lamoille Health Partners Pediatrics (contact Jenn Chittick)

## Parenting Education

Parenting and childbirth education is provided by:

- Lamoille Family Center
- Lactation and Birthing Solutions
- Lamoille Home Health and Hospice

## Transportation

For transportation support to and from appointments, contact Rural Community Transportation (RCT).

## Mental Health

Mental health supports include:

- Lamoille Family Center
- Lamoille County Mental Health
- LHP Behavioral Health and Wellness
- Crisis Text Line


## Substance Use

For substance use disorder treatment, contact:

- Parents in Recovery
- Medication assisted treatment (MAT) program at LHP
- Johnson Health Center
- North Central Vermont Recovery Center

## Domestic Violence

If you or someone you know is facing domestic and/or sexual violence, support is available at the Clarina Howard Nichols Center of Lamoille County.

Created in January 2026 by a student at the Larner College of Medicine  
Scan QR Code for Links: 

# Pregnant or a new parent?

COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU!

## Lamoille Home Health and Hospice

Maternal Child Health Nurse: Annie Price, RN, CLC, CBE

- Home phototherapy
- Baby checks (including weight, blood draws, and IV infusions)
- Hearing screens
- Care coordination
- Mental health support
- Pregnancy preparation and childbirth education
- Lactation support
- Pediatric palliative care
- Services can occur in place of choice (does not have to be in patient's home)

Contact: [www.lhha.org](http://www.lhha.org)  
(802) 888-4651

## Lamoille Family Center

- Playgroups, parenting education, welcome baby visits, baby chats, and more!
- Hearing and vision screening
- Children's Integrated Services (support prenatally-age 6)
- Early intervention for kids <3 years old with or at risk of developmental delay
- Early childhood and family mental health services for families and providers with children who demonstrate challenging behaviors
- Specialized childcare services (birth to age 13) for children with identified special needs
- Strong Families Vermont: pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care; lactation support and nutritional education; parenting support; care for babies and young children
- Childcare support services: referrals and financial assistance
- DULCE
  - Comprehensive care involving pediatricians, pediatric NPs, family specialists, lawyers, and early childhood development professionals

Contact: [www.lamoillefamilycenter.org](http://www.lamoillefamilycenter.org)  
(802) 888-5229

## Lactation and Birthing Solutions

Owner: Vicki Rich, RN, IBCLC, RLC, CCE, CD

- Breastfeeding, pregnancy preparation, and childbirth education, including a monthly breastfeeding group
- Lactation consultation
- Maternal assessments
- Infant assessments and weight checks
- Mental health first aid
- Doula services
- Can occur in private or group settings, either at home, at Vicki's place, or at a neutral location

Contact: <https://lactationandbirthingsolutions.com>  
(802) 888-3470


## WIC (via Vermont Department of Health)

- Food benefits
  - Nutrition Education
  - Breastfeeding support
  - Counseling
  - Financial assistance
- Contact: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/familywic>  
(802) 888-7447 or (888) 253-8798

## Contact Information for Other Resources:

If you're on a computer or mobile device, hover over the resource name to be taken to their website!

- **Lamoille Health Partners Morrisville (Pediatrics and Family Medicine):** (802) 888-5639
- **Lamoille Health Partners Family Medicine Cambridge:** (802) 644-5114
- **Tamarack Family Medicine:** (802) 851-0999
- **Hardwick Area Health Center:** (802) 748-9405
- **Johnson Health Center:** (802) 251-6209
- **Copley Women's Center:** (802) 888-8100
- **Lamoille Valley Pregnancy Resource Center:** (802) 302-5022
- **Lamoille County Mental Health:** (802) 888-5026
- **Lamoille Health Partners Behavioral Health and Wellness:** (802) 888-8320
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text VT to 741741 - available 24/7, anywhere in Vermont
- **Rural Community Transport:** (802) 748-8170
- **Parents in Recovery:** (802) 851-8120
- **Medication Assisted Treatment Program at LHP:** (802) 888-6009
- **North Central Vermont Recovery Center:** (802) 851-8120
- **Clarina Howard Nichols Center of Lamoille County:** (802) 888-5256

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# Intervention and Methodology for Implementation

# Results and Reflection

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## IMPACT:

- While the finalized resource has not yet been posted for patients to see, providers, including physicians, NPs, PAs, and nurses have expressed their appreciation for this project. Many noted that they were not aware of several of the organizations listed on the resource and looked forward to sharing them with their patient cohorts.
- As more patients learn about these local services, I am optimistic they will utilize more resources within Lamoille County to circumvent the need to travel further distances for care. Especially for patients facing transportation issues or financial strain, these community-based connections may allow for provision of services that would otherwise be inaccessible.

## EVALUATION:

- With more time, I would evaluate the effectiveness of this project by tabulating the number of referrals to community organizations including Lamoille Home Health and Hospice, the Lamoille Family Center, and Lactation and Birthing Solutions. I would also conduct further interviews of staff at these sites to gain their perspectives on how disseminating this resource has affected the number of patients seeking their services and the types of services they provide. Finally, it would be important to connect directly with patients to learn about their experiences using this resource to access local care.

## CHALLENGES:

- Potential challenges with implementation may include low patient and/or provider engagement with the resource due to lack of time during busy clinic visits or limited access to technology and/or phone services. It may also be difficult to keep the resource updated as service offerings evolve over time.

# Future Directions

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- Ensure that this informational document is made readily available to patients and providers across Lamoille County
- Act as a liaison between patients and community programs by facilitating initial contact, especially for patients with limited access to phone and/or internet service
- Identify gaps in resources for pregnant patients and/or newborns and devise creative solutions
- Create similar documents containing resources for pregnant people and/or newborns in other maternal health desert areas
- Generate and disseminate a list of resources in Lamoille County for other marginalized patient demographics (e.g. LGBTQ+ community, elderly people)

# References and Citations

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4. Minion SC, Krans EE, Brooks MM, Mendez DD, Haggerty CL. Association of Driving Distance to Maternity Hospitals and Maternal and Perinatal Outcomes. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2022;140(5):812. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000004960>
5. Atwani R, Robbins L, Saade G, Tetsuya Kawakita. Association of Maternity Care Deserts With Maternal and Pregnancy-Related Mortality. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*. Published online June 26, 2025. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1097/aog.0000000000005976>