Introducing Winnipeg’s First Birth Centre

What is a birth centre?

A birth centre offers women a home-like place in the community where they can give birth attended by midwives and surrounded by their families.

Centrally located at the corner of St. Mary’s Road and St. Anne’s Road, Winnipeg’s first birth centre will provide a range of clinical and educational services to support women and their families through pregnancy, birth, and early parenting.

Who can use the birth centre?

The birth centre will offer a range of services to pregnant women from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Women who are clients of midwives in Winnipeg and who meet the criteria for safe out-of-hospital births may choose to deliver their babies at the birth centre. However, any woman, regardless of where she chooses to give birth, can use the educational and clinical services.

Standards of care

The birth centre’s services will meet Canadian and international standards of safe practice and service excellence.

The birth centre is designed to support natural birth and will not offer medical procedures like caesarean sections and epidurals. We are creating space plans and service protocols to ensure quick access to emergency services if necessary.

Birth Centre services

The birth centre will provide a range of maternal care services to women and their families including: prenatal, primary maternal, postpartum and newborn care, and counselling and educational services.

The birth centre is a designated bilingual site and will produce all written materials and offer many services in both English and French.
Design features

The birth centre will be accessible and environmentally friendly. It will welcome families and provide play areas and child-minding services for children. It will also include a community education area with a kitchen, to accommodate meetings and group programs.

The birthing area will have four spacious birthing rooms. Each one will have comfortable furniture, a large tub and shower for use during labour and birth and medical equipment, stored discreetly out-of-sight until it is needed.

There will be a nearby area where labouring women can walk and have access to outdoor green space.

Birth Centre staff

Professionally trained midwives will provide primary care to women and their babies during pregnancy, labour, birth, and the early postpartum period. Midwives are registered with the College of Midwives of Manitoba and must follow specific requirements set out in legislation. Midwives work together with other health professionals and consult with medical specialists as needed.

Health educators, breastfeeding support workers, nurses, counsellors and other health and community resource persons will provide education and support services.

When will the birth centre open and how did it get started?

The birth centre is scheduled to open in May 2011 with the full range of services for women and their families being phased in over the months following the opening. Government support for the birth centre is the result of the hard work of a committee of community women dedicated to expanding birth options for women. In January 2010, the Honourable Teresa Oswald, Minister of Health, announced funding for the birth centre.

The centre is a joint project of Women’s Health Clinic and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

When completed, Women’s Health Clinic will operate the birth centre programs and services.

For more information:
Visit Women’s Health Clinic website: www.womenshealthclinic.org