

Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene Celebrate 1,000 Waterbirths

Number One in the Nation for Waterbirths

The Cheshire Medical Center Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene
April 2004

Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene just celebrated the delivery of a healthy baby girl who represented the 1,000th waterbirth at the hospital since they started in 1998. The community hospital ranks number one in the nation for number of waterbirths, and percentage of women choosing waterbirths (45.5%).

The birth was a milestone for the team at Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene because offering waterbirths reflects their commitment to empower women during their birthing experience. The waterbirths have been proven to be less intrusive and healthier for the mother and baby than other birthing settings.

"Birthing is a natural process that should be family-centered and should take place in a calm and friendly environment," states Kathy Forrister, RNC, the clinical leader of the women and children's health unit at Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene. "When a baby is born by waterbirth they are more alert and cry less and are able to immediately bond with their mothers. It is such a peaceful experience."

Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene have become a model to other community hospitals across the nation by sharing their story. A physician, a nurse, and a certified nurse midwife have been asked to present at the International Waterbirth Congress in April to discuss the birthing process at the hospital.

"We are honored to be looked at as leaders in waterbirthing," says Tom Link, Director of Marketing and Planning at Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene. "The commitment and dedication of the entire maternity team have made waterbirth a popular and successful option for women in our community."

Barbara Harper, RN, the founder and director of Waterbirth International, a nonprofit educational resource and referral network that focuses on the therapeutic use of water in maternity care, has worked with the Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock team since the beginning.



Illustration 1: Proud parents Seth and Stephanie Stafford with daughter Thalia; Tom Link, Administrative Director of Marketing & Community Relations; and labor and delivery nurse Joy Lippencott, RN.

"It is amazing that in only a few years this community hospital has become number one in the nation for facilitating waterbirths," stated Harper. "When I first started working with the Cheshire team I knew that their dedication and commitment to embracing the complete waterbirth program would quickly result in a dramatic change in the practice. We are fortunate to have their team presenting at the International Waterbirth Congress, because they have a great story and great statistics to share."

Cheshire Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene are two organizations that collaborate in programs and procedures to provide the best possible care to the community. Cheshire Medical Center is a 177-bed acute care health organization and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene is a multi-specialty group practice with over sixty physicians representing twenty-five primary care and specialty areas. They offer individual and family-centered birthing choices, including waterbirth, with assistance from obstetricians, midwives, doulas and nursing staff in a pleasant, family-friendly space. Maternity and support services include classes, lactation services, and post-delivery support.



<http://www.cheshire-med.com/news/Waters0404.html>