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CheckUP



Baby Boom

Reasons for a record number of births, page 6



Baby Boom

Colleagues
help deliver
more babies
than ever
before

“It must be something in the water.”

“All the snow we had last winter kept people inside.”

“It must have been a festive holiday season.”

These theories attempt to explain the record number of babies we’ve delivered every month since July. “We joke around and wonder what happened nine months ago,” says Erika Linden, RN, director of the labor and delivery unit.

Colleagues in the labor and delivery and mother-baby units usually deliver and care for an average of 300 babies each month. Since this summer, the units have helped deliver:

- 379 babies in July
- 405 babies in August
- 356 babies in September
- 327 babies in October

What’s the real reason for the increase in births?

- **Our resources and reputation.** Our maternal-fetal medicine specialists minimize and manage the risk for high-risk pregnancies for many expectant mothers in our region. Hospitals throughout the area also turn to us to care for their premature and sick newborns in our Level III neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). “We are the perinatal transfer center for the region,” says LaDene Gross, RN, patient care services administrator, “and many of our patients are those who need support from our maternal fetal medicine specialists.”
- **Changing demographics.** More young couples are moving to our area to start or expand their families.

- **Around-the-clock care.** We provide 24-hour physician, anesthesia and neonatal coverage.

To handle the increased community need, colleagues are going above and beyond to care for all mothers and babies. “The members of our staff are very engaged in the care they provide,” Linden says. “We make sure the standard of care is the same no matter how many mothers we have laboring at one time.”

Physicians, residents, midwives, nurses, anesthesia professionals, support partners, technical partners and administrative partners work together to meet all patients’ needs. “Our colleagues have a passion for what they do, and want to make this important event memorable for families,” Gross says.

That passion fuels problem-solving when it's needed. "We have to maintain our flexibility because we have very little control over our volume," Linden says. "We don't close our unit or divert. Our doors are always open."

When volume is high, patients who need non-pregnancy-related care may be transferred to other units with capacity, but the high level of care remains the same. "Any patient requiring care in labor and delivery is seen and cared for," Gross says.

Based on projections, the number of moms and babies we care for is expected to stabilize. However, colleagues are ready to handle the next peak in occupancy when it occurs. "Patient census and staffing needs are assessed and discussed a minimum of every 12 hours, sometimes every four hours," Gross says.

When will we see our next baby boom? It could happen in the spring. "Hurricane Irene occurred in August, so we're expecting May to be very busy," Linden says.

—Lauren Fetterman

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some parents choose family names. Some choose a celebrity-inspired moniker. Others simply choose a name they love.

Here are the most popular names for babies born in 2011:

Boys

1. Mason
2. Liam
3. Jacob
4. Ethan
5. Noah

6. Aiden
7. Jackson
8. Logan
9. Jack
10. Ryan

Girls

1. Emma
2. Olivia
3. Sophia
4. Isabella
5. Ava

6. Madison
7. Abigail
8. Ella
9. Emily
10. Lily

Baby boomers—Colleagues like Shelley Adams, RN (right), are going above and beyond to help deliver more babies for couples like Tara and Andrew McGinniss (with their new daughter, Madison).

