

MultiCare

MultiCare Vitals

Unexpected emergency room delivery a success

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Photo courtesy [Butterfly Kiss Photography](#).

By Roxanne Cooke

It was 5am the Friday before Labor Day weekend, and Brittney Johnson was on her bathroom floor crying through painful contractions.

Pregnant with her third child and a week past her due date, Johnson was certain she was in labor. Her hospital in Issaquah had sent her back home to Auburn a few hours earlier, instructing her to return when she could no longer talk during her contractions.

The mother of two decided she'd arrive early to her scheduled OB/GYN appointment later that morning to be safe.

"I figured once I saw my doctor, it would be fine," she says.

But on the way back to Issaquah, Johnson felt her baby coming. Her husband pulled off the freeway to get her to the closest emergency care possible — MultiCare Covington Medical Center.

Covington Medical Center is not a traditional hospital with a birth center, but it was the closest option for the family. The facility provides emergency care in what's known as a "freestanding" emergency department (ED).

Freestanding EDs don't typically handle labor and delivery, but there was no time to transfer Johnson to a nearby hospital.

The doctors and nurses working that morning — plus the night shift who stayed to help — came together to help her give birth safely.

At 7:51am, half an hour after arriving, Johnson gave birth to healthy baby Madison.

Just the right timing

When Johnson arrived just after 7am, the night shift and day shift were transitioning.

Because she arrived in active labor, and the doctor could feel the baby's head, staff at Covington Medical Center knew there wasn't time for a transfer.

Fortunately, several members of the night shift stayed to help, says Braden Andersen, RN, Covington Medical Center nurse manager.

"They were right there with us," says Diana Jimenez, RN, a nurse at the Covington Medical Center who was working that morning and helped with the delivery.

Because of the extra staff, one nurse was fully dedicated to just making calls to get the resources needed, including an OB/GYN and ambulances to transfer mom and baby to Auburn Medical Center after delivery.

"We were lucky that Dr. Wallace, the OB, got here in time," Jimenez says, referring to Calvin Wallace, MD, who turned his car around as soon as he got the call.

Kevin Callahan, MD, the emergency department doctor working that morning, stayed by Johnson's side and talked her through things until Dr. Wallace arrived. Together, Dr. Callahan and Dr. Wallace helped deliver Johnson's baby girl.



Freestanding EDs

A freestanding ED is structurally separate and distinct from a hospital, unlike a traditional emergency department. Because a freestanding ED doesn't have a hospital immediately adjacent, resources are limited — and births are uncommon.

"I've delivered babies in parking lots [of hospitals], but you can send those to labor and delivery," Jimenez says. "This is a little different because we have to do everything."

An expansion to MultiCare Covington Medical Center is currently under way, with plans to open in late 2016. The first phase of the expansion includes 24 inpatient beds, a family birth center and many other services.

Healthy and happy

Baby Madison just turned one month old and she's healthy and happy, says Johnson, who is grateful to the staff for helping her through the experience.

"The Covington staff was phenomenal," she says. "They really tried to calm me. It could have been so much worse. If I had delivered in my car, I might not be holding my beautiful baby girl right now."

Johnson came back to the Covington Medical Center two weeks after giving birth to thank the staff and show off Madison.

"That was really heartwarming," Jimenez says. "Not only did the baby look great, which was wonderful to see, but the mom was so appreciative. Everything did work out."

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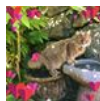
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Braden C. Andersen

Wonderful job by the Multicare Covington Emergency Department staff! I know everyone involved sure enjoyed getting to meet baby Madison. The MultiCare Covington Medical Center is a great place!

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Lynne Smith

Beautiful mom and baby!

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