



A Quality Improvement Program At the Foundation for Health Care Quality



**A Collaborative Guide for Patient Transfers
to Overlake Hospital Medical Center**

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BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY MIDWIVES RE: HOSPITAL TRANSFERS

How pregnancy, birth, and postpartum will unfold can be unpredictable. Understanding this and remaining flexible about one's birth plan, can minimize trauma for birthing parents and their families if they need to change provider and setting. Preparation by the midwife throughout the course of care can help make a transfer experience, when necessary, more positive for clients.

Smooth Transitions™ seeks to improve the transfer process by enhancing communication between community midwives and hospital providers and staff. One of the program's primary goals is to build a collaborative model of care that puts birthing families at the center when they need to access hospital-based care. Because these transfer situations can be stressful for everyone involved, the more fully-informed one's clients are about what to expect in the event of a transfer, the more likely it is that the midwives and the hospital providers and staff will be able to work together to give these families the respectful, high-quality care they deserve.



Smooth Transitions Website: <https://www.qualityhealth.org/smoothtransitions/>

PREPARING MIDWIFERY CLIENTS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A HOSPITAL TRANSFER

During the Initial Consultation Visit:

- Discuss your scope of care/practice (i.e. normal/low-risk). Consider sharing any risk-screening guidelines you use in your practice. Be clear about your intention to engage with clients in a process of shared decision-making throughout their care and to allow ample time for questions and discussion about their options
- Review common reasons for transfer (antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and for newborns)
- Describe your transfer relationship with local hospitals/providers
- Share your practice's statistics for antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn transfer (adjusting for parity).

Throughout the Course of Care:

- **Be attentive** to any negative feelings the client may express about hospitals and the possibility of a transfer. Address any specific concerns/fears the client may have and refer for counseling, as needed, to process any unresolved birth trauma or sexual abuse history that might increase the client's reticence about giving birth in the hospital with an unknown provider.
- **Be sensitive** to any cultural preferences and issues related to race, sexual orientation, and sexual identity and offer to help ensure that your client receives respectful, responsive, and appropriate care in the event of a hospital transfer.
- **Knowing** your practice's limits, understanding and communicating the receiving provider/hospital policies, and clearly presenting options with time for questions and processing will increase client satisfaction with any type of transfer of care if it is needed.

As Your Client Nears Term:

- Encourage them to **take a tour of the hospital** they would most likely transfer to if a complication were to arise either in labor or postpartum. Transferring to an environment that is familiar can reduce anxiety. If the hospital has developed a document that explains the care they offer, share it with your client.
- Encourage them to **draft a birth plan specifically for hospital transfer**. Reviewing this plan together provides another opportunity to check in about any fears they may still have about the possibility of a transfer.
- Many clients use online tools to develop their birth preferences/plans. Since these plans typically include language about routine hospital-based interventions (induction, augmentation, epidural, cesarean section, etc.) that clients were hoping to avoid by planning to give birth at home or in a birth center, **it's important to explain that these interventions may be necessary tools in the event of a transfer**. You might want to frame this discussion by noting that transferring to the hospital is **not** a failure—it is accessing appropriate tools at the right time.
- Have your clients **pack a hospital bag**, just in case. Transfers can be hectic, even if they're non-emergent, and having one less thing to do at that moment can be helpful.
- **Revisit in detail your practice's plan for transfer and emergency situations**. This has the potential to be a stressful topic but it will give you a chance to convey how prepared you are to handle these events. Clients generally feel better when they have information ahead of time rather than being surprised in the moment.
- **Clarify what your role will be in the event of a transfer** including receiving provider communication; how records/information will get shared with the hospital provider and staff; whether you will stay at the hospital and support/advocate for the client; what the course of care with you will look like after discharge from the hospital.

During a Transfer:

- Direct, provider-to-provider communication is best. Ideally this hand-off occurs face-to-face, at the bedside, with both nursing and the client involved. **If the hospital your client is transferring to participates in Smooth Transitions, follow the transfer protocol** for that particular hospital which will offer guidance on roles, expectations, communication, and client records.
- **If the transfer is emergent**, Smooth Transitions has a [911 Protocol](#) that is a helpful tool for initiating and communicating with EMS.



911 Protocol

- If possible, **stay in contact with your client** throughout the entirety of their hospital stay to help them navigate decisions and make sure they receive the intended care.
- **Make yourself available for communication** with the hospital and staff, especially regarding discharge and course of care for your client after discharge.

- Before you leave the hospital, a brief de-brief with the receiving provider may be helpful, particularly if any of the interactions during the transfer have been stressful. This is **not** necessarily the time to give pointed feedback—you can do that through the Smooth Transitions [Community Midwife Survey](#). Rather, it's an opportunity to build a mutually respectful relationship by expressing gratitude for any aspect of the transfer that went well.

Even under the best of circumstances, transfers can be disappointing, even devastating for clients. **Always check in with clients** after a transfer to assess how they are doing emotionally. Because their feelings often shift over time, it's important to do this more than once during the postpartum period.

- **Offer mental health resources as needed** for additional support.
- **Encourage them to complete the Smooth Transitions [Client Survey](#)** to share their transfer experience (positive, negative, or mixed). Let them know their feedback is valuable and will be heard by hospital leadership and used to improve future transfers.



Client Survey

- It is also important for you, the community midwife, to provide your perspective on the transfer by **filling out the Smooth Transitions [Community Midwife Survey](#)**.



Lastly:

- **Attending regular Smooth Transitions Perinatal Transfer Committee (PTC) meetings** at the hospitals where you transfer to will:
 1. Ensure you have the latest information about that hospital's protocols
 2. Provide an opportunity for you to give and receive feedback about transfers
 3. Help build relationships with hospital providers and staff.
- If you are unable to attend the PTC meetings, **stay in touch with the Community Midwife Liaison** for the hospitals you transfer to and share any concerns you may have.

Address: 1035 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Main Phone: (425) 688-5000

FOR LABORING PATIENT TRANSFERRING TO OVERLAKE HOSPITAL

Welcome to Overlake. Our team understands that just because your plans have changed you still retain the right to decline or accept any of the services the hospital offers.

Please call the Labor and Delivery Nurses Desk at **425-688-5351** to let our staff know that you are on your way.

You can also register by phone—call **425-688-5326**. You can also call that number if you have questions regarding the registration process.

Parking:

- Follow signs to the Emergency Room on NE 10th Street
- Park in the surface lot (you will not be towed)
- Go the Emergency entrance, but take a right to the second set of elevators to level 2 OB ED
- Use the Building 1 public elevators on your right
- Go to Level 2 for the Labor & Delivery reception desk

On Admission:

- Your midwife will join you for a warm hand-off to a midwife or OB who will be caring for you
- Your primary support person, and secondary support person can stay with you
- For a cesarean birth, one person of your choice may join you in the operating room
- You may start in triage (OB Emergency Dept.), or go directly to a birthing suite
- All hospitals have standard consents for care and financial responsibility forms
- All hospitals have a standard Coved swab obtained on admission
- I.V. access and a blood sample are requested
- Remember you are the most important part of this team, we will communicate as a team about next steps and use a personalized white board in your room to list your birth plan

Labor Support:

- Our team can support your labor progress using physiological labor coping methods
- Doula and partner support are welcome
- Spinning Babies™ techniques
- Nitrous Oxide or analgesics
- Epidural if requested (*requires lab value results, IV access and IV fluids*)

Labor Rooms: Your Labor & Delivery suite is equipped to help you feel as comfortable as possible, and our skilled nursing staff is there to support you throughout your delivery. Each suite includes:

- A special birthing bed
- Birth balls
- Warmed blankets
- Spacious tub and shower
- Dimming lights and control of room temperature
- Wireless intermittent or continuous monitoring of your baby's heartbeat.
- Access to ice machines and nutritional rooms
- Flat-screen TV and educational videos
- Free wireless internet

After Birth: As soon as your baby is born, we offer:

- Delayed cord clamping if possible (1 minute)
- At least 60 minutes of uninterrupted skin to skin with your baby
- Feeding support
- Early discharge if desired and possible

How was your experience?

Please scan the QR code to complete the survey.

We value your feedback to help us improve the quality and safety of patients.



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FOR NEWBORN TRANSFER TO OVERLAKE HOSPITAL

Welcome to the Overlake Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). We realize that your baby's admission to the NICU can be a stressful experience for you and your family. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Please call the NICU Nurses Desk at **425-688-5283** to let our staff know that you are on your way

Register by phone—call **425-688-5326**. You can also call that number if you have questions regarding the registration process.

Parking:

- Follow signs to the Emergency Room on NE 10th Street
- Park in the surface lot (you will not be towed)
- Bypass the ER entrance for second set of elevators to level 2 OBED
- Use the Building 1 public elevators on your right
- Go to Level 2 for the Labor & Delivery reception desk

On Admission:

- Your Midwife will join you for a warm hand-off to the Neonatologist
- You will be asked for photo ID, insurance information, provider's name and contact information
- Maternal Prenatal labs **FAX to 425-688-5011**
- Pediatric Clinic and contact information (Midwife can serve as pediatric liaison for first 14 days)
- You will be given identifying wrist and security bands that will not be removed until discharge

About Us: Overlake is a Level 3 (highest level) Neonatal Care Unit, with two locations on campus; both areas are staffed 24/7 by specially trained neonatologists, nurses and respiratory therapists

- Parents are welcome at all times and are encouraged to remain with their baby so they can learn their baby's cues and become more confident in caring for their newborn
- Parents are welcome to join bedside rounds with your care team each morning for updates on their baby; beginning at 9:30 am
- Your baby has an Angel Eye bedside camera: giving you the ability to live-stream your baby on your phone 24/7 so you may see your baby when you are unable to be at the bedside.
- Lactation RN's are available to assist with infant feeding needs, and Overlake has a donor milk bank for additional supplementation
- The family waiting area for the NICU is equipped with internet access, a television, a telephone, microwave and a refrigerator for your convenience

How was your experience?

Please scan the QR code to complete the survey.

We value your feedback to help us improve the quality and safety of patients.





- Were you involved in a recent hospital transfer from a planned community birth?
- Would you be willing to share your experience by completing one of the following surveys?



Receiving Provider www.surveymonkey.com/r/receivingprovider



Nursing Staff www.surveymonkey.com/r/nursingstaff1



EMS www.surveymonkey.com/r/EMSproviders



Transferring Midwife www.surveymonkey.com/r/communitymidwife



Client www.surveymonkey.com/r/midwiferyclient

Thank you for helping to improve the quality and safety of these transfers in Washington State.

Contact the **Smooth Transitions** Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org

Smooth Transitions Data Collection

A Guide for Community Midwives

All data collected will be confidentially shared at regular Perinatal Transfer Committee Meetings for the purpose of improving transfers.

1. Once the transfer is complete, please take a moment to encourage participation in the Smooth Transition surveys for the appropriate people: receiving provider, nursing staff, and EMS, if applicable. We recommend handing out this survey card, with the appropriate survey circled.
2. To encourage clients to complete their survey, there are several options:
 - a. Hand your client a card with the link/QR code to complete the survey at their convenience
 - b. Set up a time to do the survey at a postpartum visit
 - c. Text your client a link to the survey with a reminder a week later
 - d. Email the survey link to your client
 - e. At the final postpartum visit, ask if your client has completed the survey, and if not, encourage them to do so after the visit or at their earliest convenience

Smooth Transitions is always open to improving data collection. Please contact the Program Coordinator with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Thank you! smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org

Address: 1035 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Main Phone: (425) 688-5000

Important Phone Numbers:

Labor & Delivery: 425.688.5351

Reception: 425.688.5326

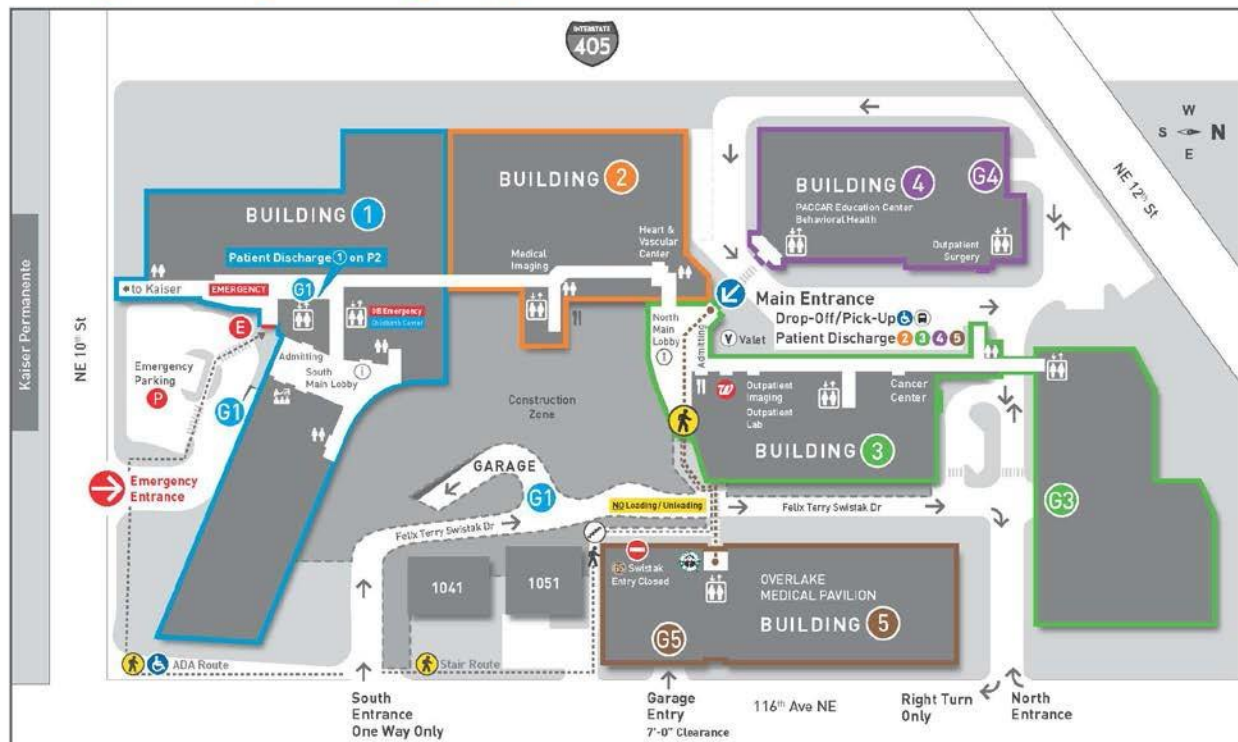
Postpartum Unit: 425.688.5344

NICU: 425.688.5283

Lactation Support: 425.688.5516

Parent & Baby Care Center: 425.688.538

Campus Wayfinding Map



MAP KEY

- Building Elevator
- Restroom
- Concierge
- Dining
- Conference Rooms
- Pedestrian Only

BUILDING KEY

- BUILDING 1 South Tower, New East Tower
- GARAGE G1 Parking
- BUILDING 2 West Tower
- BUILDING 3 Overlake Medical Tower
- GARAGE G3 Parking

- BUILDING 4 PACCAR Education Center, Behavioral Health
- GARAGE G4 Parking

- BUILDING 5 Overlake Medical Pavilion
- GARAGE G5 Parking - Entry on 116th - 7'-0" Clearance

Detour to Main Entrance for Oversize Vehicle Drop-Off/Pick-Up/Shuttles

Entrance through doors A, B, or Emergency Room Surface lot