



FLIN FLON GENERAL HOSPITAL

OBSTETRICAL ISSUES

FACT SHEET

What is happening with the Obstetrics Unit in Flin Flon?

Effective 0800 November 18th, a suspension of obstetrical delivery services in Flin Flon will begin and continue until the development of the Provincial Women's Health Clinical Services Plan at which time this suspension will be revisited.

Why was this decision made?

The past year has seen unreliable, unpredictable and unsustainable obstetrical delivery service in Flin Flon due to lack of consistent obstetrical coverage since the departure of Flin Flon's lone obstetrician. This inconsistent coverage of care and the findings of a recent external review which recommended that obstetrics in Flin Flon be suspended is why the Region made the decision to suspend obstetrical delivery services. This step was required to ensure the safety of mothers and babies.

Is this about cutting costs?

No. This has nothing to do with cutting costs and everything to do with patient safety.

Is this a permanent situation?

The suspension will be revisited once the Provincial Women's Health Clinical Service Plan has been completed in 2019.

What are expectant mothers supposed to do now?

Expectant mothers should speak to their care provider. Together they will make alternate arrangements for delivery.

How is an expectant mother expected to know how to make other arrangements?

Expectant mothers receiving prenatal care in Flin Flon will be assisted by their care provider to make alternate arrangements for delivery. Prenatal and postpartum care will continue to be provided in Flin Flon. This change is only about delivery.

If a woman just finds out or suspects she is pregnant, what should she do?

She should do what she normally would and talk to her care provider about prenatal care.

I am not familiar with The Pas Hospital, how will I know what do to and where to go?

This will be a part of the birthing plan that you will develop with your care provider. They will help you plan and communicate your plan to health care providers in The Pas.

What is a Level 1 obstetrics service?

A level 1 obstetrics service is for low risk deliveries for expectant mothers who received regular prenatal care.

Was FFGH ever a Level 2 or 3 obstetrics service?

No, Flin Flon has never been a level 2 or 3 birth centre, it has always been a Level 1 obstetrical service delivery centre.

What are the barriers to getting another obstetrician in Flin Flon? (Why can't we get another obstetrician in Flin Flon?)

Like any other employer the health region posts available positions and actively recruits to fill them through a number of means. That doesn't mean we will always have applicants for those positions. Unfortunately, we have not had success to date in recruiting a fulltime obstetrician to the position at the Flin Flon General Hospital despite our best efforts.

Is this suspension because of all the money spent on the new ER?

No. This decision is about patient safety and has nothing to do with funding.

What is the Region doing about this?

We have not given up. We will continue in our efforts to recruit to fill all vacant positions in the Region.

Is this part of a plan to suspend any other services?

No. This was a difficult but necessary decision based on ensuring patient safety for expectant mothers and their newborns.

What happens if someone goes into labour unexpectedly?

A mother in active labour arriving at the Flin Flon General Hospital Emergency Department will be assessed by a doctor and a decision will be made on whether the expectant mom can be safely transported to The Pas or have an emergency birth at Flin Flon General Hospital.

Will the Northern Health Region be paying for expectant moms to drive to The Pas and for accommodations if needed?

The Northern Patient Transportation program subsidizes medical transportation costs for eligible insured services not available in their home community. Patients can apply to have their transportation costs reimbursed under the program. All applications are considered on their own merits consistent with the NPTP policy.

Who will be providing the prenatal and postpartum care in Flin Flon if there are no obstetricians?

Expectant moms will receive their prenatal care under the direction of their primary care provider in the Flin Flon Clinic. Postpartum care will be provided on the same basis, but in collaboration with their obstetric doctor at the point of delivery.

Will staff be losing their jobs?

No. There is no anticipated job loss related to this decision.

Are you sure this is not part of the Region's cost cutting exercise?

This difficult decision has nothing to do with cutting costs and everything to do with patient safety.

What will it take to reverse this decision? And can it be reversed?

The decision to suspend birthing services at Flin Flon General Hospital was a difficult but necessary decision. It was a clinical decision in the interest of patient safety. It is important to know that this was neither a political or strictly administrative decision. We consider it a clinical decision and we will not be pressured to make any decision which places patients at risk or in jeopardy. As indicated previously, the suspension will be revisited once the Provincial Women's Health Clinical Services Plan has been completed.