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Lane Co. Prenatal Clinic Closes As Birth Center Pushes To Open

By [TIFFANY ECKERT \(/PEOPLE/TIFFANY-ECKERT\)](#) • FEB 26, 2021

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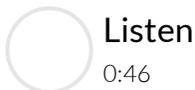
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In January, Community Health Centers of Lane County closed its Prenatal Clinic. Many clients are in the Latinx community. The closure has created a gap in services-- which an emerging Birth Center is looking to fill.



KLCC's Tiffany Eckert reports on the closure of Lane County's prenatal health clinic and the new community based Birth Center preparing to fill in the pre and post service gap for expectant mothers and families.

Pregnant people often chose Lane County's federally qualified Prenatal Clinic because of its wrap around services, easy access to care, and integrated Spanish speaking staff.

With this crucial service gone, Our Community Birth Center (<https://www.ourcommunitybirthcenter.org/>) is preparing to step in. AlexAnn Westlake is Executive Director of the non-profit and a certified nurse midwife. She said they've held focus groups with Latina community members.

"There was a specific request to have care providers who are Latinx," she said, "and speak Spanish as their native language."

Westlake said they are currently negotiating a lease and continue seeking start up funds with a goal of opening an inclusive new birth center in the fall.



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Closures of PeaceHealth's Nurse Midwifery Birth Center in 2019 and Lane County's Prenatal clinic has left a gap in services for expecting families. This baby's mom was treated at the county's Charnelton Health Center before it shut.

CREDIT HANNAH AUSTIN



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Certified Nurse Midwife AlexAnn Westlake checks on a new born.

CREDIT ALEXANN WESTLAKE



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Hannah Austin has OHP insurance. When the former PeaceHeath Nurse Midwifery Birth Center closed, she fell into a gap where there were no midwives available. She transferred to receive prenatal care through the Lane County Prenatal Clinic so that she could continue to access Midwifery care for her prenatal and postpartum care. That clinic just closed its doors.

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Ren McLemore had OHP insurance. She says the combination of the county prenatal services, paired with the freestanding birth center model of care for her birth was a win-win in her experience.

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