

**Dear families and friends of the Southcoast Health community, Department of Public Health, and residents of the region:**

As I know the closing of Tobey Hospital Maternity Unit brings so many emotions to the community of individuals who have delivered their babies there, and Moms who planned to, it is very hard to see the hard work and devotion the team has created come to an end.

I write this letter to share my hope, experience, and faith that Southcoast Health has another great place to choose to help bring your baby into the world. I will be the first to say, I know many of the nurses and providers at Tobey, and they are amazing at what they do. It is with great hope that some of the Tobey staff will be able to collaborate with the outstanding team at the St Luke's Hospital Family Centered Unit to continue providing great care.

Last August 2018, my husband Marc and I were ecstatic to learn that we were expecting our second child. With my first pregnancy in 2012, I had some complications and was considered high-risk. We were then blessed with a healthy baby boy. Knowing we had some bumps in the road with my first pregnancy, I knew I wanted to deliver in a setting that had both a level 2 nursery, and additional medical resources for the baby and me. This is when we decided to deliver at St. Luke's.

There was no question in my heart or mind, I knew I wanted to be cared for by Christine Pereira, Certified Nurse Midwife of Southcoast OBGYN. The care, support, encouragement, and reassurance Christine gave me throughout my pregnancy and beyond was something I am so grateful for and will never forget. From planning appropriate monitoring for my pregnancy, to postpartum breastfeeding and emotional support, I always knew I had Christine, and a team of knowledgeable nurses and other providers beside me.

In April 2019 we welcomed our second son into the world at St Luke's Hospital FCU. He did come a bit early, but was healthy and strong. The personalized care I received from Christine Pereira, CNM, and the entire team on the Family Centered Unit during my experience was incredible.

As a Registered Nurse myself, I know it takes an interdisciplinary team to provide great care. I also recognized that labor and delivery isn't always smooth and uneventful, and can turn critical very quickly. I had and have so much confidence in the team at SLH to provide an experienced team, resources, and environment to keep me and my new little bundle safe.

Although I wanted the reassurance of having supportive medical measures available and in place, I also wanted the delivery to be personalized to me with the wishes I had discussed with my midwife. I am happy to express 6 months postpartum that I think back to my delivery and it was simply perfect to me. Christine coached and supported me through my labor, I delivered a healthy baby boy, and the moment he entered this world he was placed on my chest where he stayed skin to skin. (For all the breastfeeding Moms out there, I'm proud to say my little guy found his way right to breast moments after delivery.)

Throughout my time on the St. Luke's FCU, my baby was in the room with me at all times, which was really nice. The OB Techs and Nurses went above and beyond to assist us. I will never forget my labor

nurse, or postpartum nurse that helped me with nursing when I was completely exhausted, emotional, and at a loss of how to get my new baby to latch. They were all there to support my husband and I during one of the most precious, and memorable times in our life.

I hope this letter expresses through example the outstanding care that is available to expecting families in our community. We are very fortunate to have the entire team at Southcoast Health and St Luke's Hospital so close to us.

Sincerely,  
Whitney Gaspar  
Mattapoisett

