From: mrscastle23@gmail.com
To: City Council Email
Subject: Grady Maternity Closure
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Good evening, Mayor, Council Members, and members of our community.

My name is Bethany, and I am here tonight to speak on the closure of our labor and delivery unit — a decision that will have serious and lasting consequences for the safety, health, and future of our growing community.

This is not just about the loss of a hospital department.
This is about the loss of **timely emergency care for mothers and babies**.
It is about the loss of **safe, local access to childbirth services**.
And it is about the creation of a **maternal care desert** in a community that cannot afford one.

For years, families in this city and surrounding areas have relied on our labor and delivery unit for care close to home. Some of those families already travel significant distances to reach us because access to maternity care is already limited. Now, with this closure, those same families will be forced to travel **at least another 30 minutes** to receive care — and in obstetrics, **30 minutes can be the difference between life and death**.

Babies do not wait.
Hemorrhages do not wait.
Cord prolapses do not wait.
Shoulder dystocias do not wait.
Preeclampsia, placental abruption, uterine rupture, and fetal distress do not wait.

When an obstetric emergency happens, minutes matter. Immediate access to the right team, the right equipment, and the right facility is not a luxury — it is a necessity. Without it, major sentinel events **will** happen. That is not fearmongering. That is the reality of maternal and newborn care.

Our labor and delivery team is not an expendable service line. It is a highly trained, highly specialized emergency response team for women and newborns at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. Between us, we represent **more than 500 years of devoted experience** caring for this community. We continue specialized annual training for obstetric emergencies because we know exactly how quickly a stable labor can become a crisis. We train for the worst because our patients deserve the best chance at survival and safety when those moments happen.

And yet, despite that experience, despite that preparation, and despite the clear need in this community, this unit is being taken away.

The consequences of that decision will not be abstract. They will be felt by:

the mother in labor who cannot safely make it to the next hospital,

the family without reliable transportation,
the high-risk patient who needs immediate intervention,
the baby who needs rapid delivery,
and the EMS teams who will be asked to carry an even greater burden when emergencies occur farther from appropriate care.

This closure does not just affect hospital employees. It affects **every family in this city**, every future mother, every newborn, every first responder, and every neighboring rural or underserved patient who counted on this unit as their closest option.

We are a growing community. Growth should mean expanding essential services — not eliminating them. It should mean investing in maternal health, protecting emergency access, and recognizing that safe childbirth care is foundational public infrastructure. A city cannot call itself family-friendly, pro-growth, or community-centered while allowing mothers and babies to lose access to local delivery care.

Tonight, I am asking this council to recognize this closure for what it is: **a public safety issue, a maternal health issue, and a community access issue.** I am asking you to stand with the families who will be harmed by this decision, the healthcare workers who have dedicated their lives to this care, and the mothers and babies whose outcomes will depend on whether help is close enough when the emergency comes.

Please use your voice, your platform, and every avenue available to you to oppose this closure, demand accountability, and fight for the preservation of labor and delivery services in our community.

Because when labor starts, when a mother begins hemorrhaging, when a baby is in distress, when an emergency unfolds — **there is no substitute for care close to home.**

Thank you
Bethany Castle