

Happy New Year greetings from Lake Chelan Health Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Aaron Edwards!

As we close out the tumultuous year of 2025 and begin the new year, you will undoubtedly be hearing more about small hospitals facing closures in the communities they serve. Please know that the Lake Chelan Health Leadership Team and Board of Commissioners remain focused on providing access to high-quality healthcare services for our community.



To help keep our community informed, I will be reaching out more frequently to share strategic actions being taken by our Board and Administration to keep our community hospital open and strong. We are extremely grateful for the support you have given our Board and staff, and we will continue to strengthen our financial foundation and the services we offer—for the benefit of you, our neighbors, and friends.

In a series of messages over the next few weeks, I would like to emphasize important actions we are taking to ensure our community remains well cared for and to address common questions and concerns we are hearing—such as concerns about Lake Chelan Health closing Labor and Delivery, which we are not.

Lake Chelan Health will keep our Labor and Delivery Unit OPEN.

- This year we sent a nurse to live and train in Spokane for three months in order to prepare to expertly serve in our OB (Obstetric/labor and delivery) unit.
- This year's budget includes the purchase of specialized equipment focused on labor and delivery.
- We have and will continue to urge Governor Ferguson to include nearly \$12 million in his request to the Federal government to help fund labor and delivery in rural hospitals, including LCH.

- We participated in a national film “Giving Birth In America Just Got More Dangerous” and the video can be found at https://youtu.be/HZq94uLdj08?si=zMt6a-V1I_5l-D9m (or at perfectunion.us).
- We will continue to visit state and national lawmakers to ask for help in sustaining the labor and delivery service.
- This year we will begin a formal collaboration called “Smooth Transitions” with Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH) to further improve the care our mothers and babies receive.
- We are committed to require and support all OB labor and delivery staff and providers to maintain the skills necessary to ensure the highest quality patient care and safety is provided.

We Need Your Help—Supporting Local Labor & Delivery

To sustain our Labor and Delivery program, we must help offset the nearly \$1 million in unpaid OB care we provide each year with revenue from other hospital services. In 2025, Lake Chelan Health delivered 80 babies—just five fewer than in 2024. These numbers are very small for maintaining a full Labor and Delivery program without having the support of other resources.

You can help keep this essential service available right here in our community:

- Encourage growing families to choose Lake Chelan Health for their OB care and deliveries.
- Use our expanded local services, including primary care, specialty care, lab, radiology, and physical therapy.
- Ask your healthcare provider to send your lab and imaging orders to Lake Chelan Health instead of facilities farther away and save valuable time.

Every visit, test, and referral to our local hospital helps support Labor and Delivery and ensures that families can continue to welcome their babies close to home.

Thank you for helping us keep care local, strong, and growing.

Respectfully,

Aaron Edwards, MHPA, RHCEOC
CEO, Lake Chelan Health

