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**TO:** All Premier Health Employees; All Premier Health Medical Staff

**FROM:** Kevin Harlan, President, Atrium Medical Center and Upper Valley Medical Center

**DATE:** January 9, 2024

**RE:** **Update on Upper Valley Medical Center's Labor & Delivery Services**

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Over the past two years, as a team, we have made tremendous progress in putting Premier Health on a sustainable path to care, teach, innovate, and serve on behalf of our communities. Along the way, as part of our strategic plan, we have identified areas of unmet need and have grown to address those needs. We also have had to make difficult decisions in response to patient preferences and industry challenges.

I write to share with you one of those decisions. For a variety of reasons outlined below, we have determined it necessary to discontinue labor and delivery services at Upper Valley Medical Center. The hospital's labor and delivery services will cease operations on February 29, 2024, with the last delivery taking place on or before February 21.

Labor and delivery is a service that many people associate with a full-service community hospital, so this decision was not made lightly, and only after considering the following factors:

- A declining birth rate locally and outmigration of births
- The number of births at UVMC this year is projected to be about half of what it was less than a decade ago. This averages out to fewer than one delivery at the hospital each day.
- In 2022, 70 percent of patients living in Miami County left the county for obstetrics delivery services. In the first quarter of 2023, across Miami, Darke, and Shelby counties, Miami Valley Hospital accounted for 23.4 percent of births, while UVMC accounted for 16.4 percent of births.
- Challenges around physician recruitment are industry-wide, especially at smaller community-based hospitals, resulting in locums expenses that are not sustainable.

While the decision to close the hospital's labor and delivery unit was not easy, these factors all made the need for it obvious.

Upper Valley Medical Center and Premier Health remain committed to providing meaningful women's services to area patients:

- An office in Piqua will provide both prenatal and post-natal care.
- Gynecological surgery will continue to be performed at the hospital.

- The hospital will be opening its new Women's Imaging Center in March 2024.

Patients also can expect a seamless transition to the Berry Women's Center at Miami Valley Hospital's main campus through collaboration with physicians there.

We will be working with staff to find comparable positions within the health system. Retraining for comparable will be provided for staff who choose to move into other specialties. I would like to personally thank the labor and delivery and special care nursery staff, many of whom have devoted decades of their career to playing a role in the delivering of babies in Miami County. This is a special role, and you have handled it with reverence and as the privilege that it is.