American Nurses Association Ohio

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANA-Ohio Raises Alarm Over Closure of Trumbull County's Last Labor and Delivery Unit

Nursing organization calls for immediate collaboration to protect maternal and infant health and preserve access to essential obstetric care.

Ohio – [November 2026] — The American Nurses Association-Ohio (ANA-Ohio) is deeply concerned about Mercy Health's decision to terminate labor and delivery services at St. Joseph Warren Hospital in December 2026. This decision will leave Trumbull County, a community of nearly 200,000 residents, without hospital-based labor and delivery services. [1]

Discontinuing this essential service is more than closing a hospital department. It represents a significant reduction in access to essential maternal healthcare, including emergency obstetric services, safe delivery, and timely intervention when complications arise. Following the recent loss of Trumbull Regional Medical Center, the loss of the OB unit is another substantial loss of healthcare capacity for an already underserved region.

Regarding overall health, Ohio ranks 34th out of 50 states in the America's Health Rankings Annual Report. Trumbull County and the region reflect the state's high rates of infant mortality, largely due to preterm birth, very low birthweight infants, and other causes. Maternal health before, during, and after pregnancy is a major concern and contributes to poor maternal and infant outcomes. Ohio also has maternal and infant health disparities, with Black infants facing substantially higher mortality rates than White infants. [2,3]

Mercy Health's 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment identifies maternal, infant, and child health as one of the region's five prioritized health needs. The assessment found that 53% of community survey respondents identified maternal and child health as a top concern. It also highlights Trumbull County's elevated teen birth rate and recognizes local populations disproportionately affected by maternal and infant health challenges. [4]

Eliminating local labor and delivery services while these needs remain documented raises serious concerns about the region's ability to ensure equitable access to timely, high-quality maternity care. Many pregnant women and their families in this region lack reliable transportation. Requiring them to travel outside their county for prenatal care, delivery, and emergency obstetric services may create additional barriers and increase the risk of adverse

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outcomes, particularly for low-income families and rural residents. We cannot afford to create additional barriers to timely, lifesaving care. [4]

ANA-Ohio recognizes the operational and financial challenges facing healthcare organizations. However, decisions affecting essential services must also consider the long-term health and safety of the communities they serve. Addressing these challenges and preserving access to essential maternal healthcare will require collaboration among Mercy Health, state and local legislators and leaders, public health officials, and healthcare providers. Working together, these stakeholders should be able to identify sustainable solutions that prioritize the health and safety of mothers, infants, and families in the region. We need to avoid a crisis.

With the stakeholders listed above, ANA-Ohio suggests the following:

1. Convene Mercy Health, legislators, local government and public health officials, healthcare providers, and community leaders to collaboratively identify solutions to preserve access to essential maternal healthcare in Trumbull County.
2. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the anticipated impact of this closure on maternal and infant health outcomes and on access to care in Trumbull County, and ensure transparency with the public
3. Ensure a coordinated plan for emergency obstetric care and transportation is in place before services are discontinued.
4. Require transparency regarding the capacity of receiving facilities and their ability to safely accommodate additional patients.
5. Prioritize continuity of care for prenatal, delivery, postpartum, and lactation services for affected families.
6. Engage nurses, public health officials, community organizations, and local leaders to develop and implement sustainable solutions.

Access to safe, timely maternity care should not depend on a family's ZIP code. The loss of these services has implications far beyond hospital operations. It affects mothers, infants, families, and the health of an entire community.

ANA-Ohio urges state leaders and healthcare partners to take meaningful action to ensure obstetric care in our Trumbull County community before this closure further compromises health outcomes and access to care. We stand ready to help find solutions.

About the American Nurses Association–Ohio (ANA-Ohio):
The American Nurses Association–Ohio (ANA-Ohio) is the trusted professional registered nurses' association dedicated to promoting excellence in nursing practice, fostering high

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standards of nursing care, and advocating for the rights and interests of nurses across Ohio. Through education, advocacy, leadership, resources, and support, ANA-Ohio empowers nurses to improve health care.

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