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Supporting Pregnant Persons: The Benefits of Opening a Birth Centre in London, Ontario (Dynamic Doulas of London)

Alisha George
Western University

Megan Harris
Western University

Allison Kirkpatrick
Western University

Lianna Mathew
Western University

Amel Sassi
Western University

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Supporting Pregnant Persons: The Benefits of Opening a Birth Centre in London, Ontario

Megan Harris, Alisha George, Allison Kirkpatrick, Lianna Mathew, Amel Sassi
Undergraduate Medical Sciences, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, London, ON, Canada



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Introduction



Out-of-hospital births have become increasingly popular, with a 75% increase observed from 2004 to 2017 in North America.¹



A birth centre has special amenities which prioritize the comfort and well-being of pregnant persons and their families and provides a home-like setting for low-risk pregnancies.



Birth centres are supported by midwives and doulas. Midwives are medical professionals involved in delivery and primary care of the baby. Doulas provide pregnant persons with informational, emotional, and physical support prior to, during, and after childbirth.² Doulas can accompany midwives or physicians.



Birth centres provide a family-centred and culturally safe space for marginalized communities (i.e., Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2SIA+).



The aim of this project was to establish an effective plan to open a birth centre in London, Ontario. In doing so, this would:

1. Improve access to out-of-hospital birthing options.
2. Provide a safe space for delivery for marginalized communities.
3. Provide a central location for local midwives and doulas in Southwestern Ontario.

Methods



Examined **benefits** of doulas, midwives and a birth centre.

Created an **informative brochure**.



Met with **stakeholders** (local businesswoman and director from Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre).

Created and disseminated a **survey** to local midwives to gauge interest.



Gathered **demographic data** on London pregnant persons.

Designed the **ideal birth centre** based on responses from local midwives and doulas.

Results & Deliverables

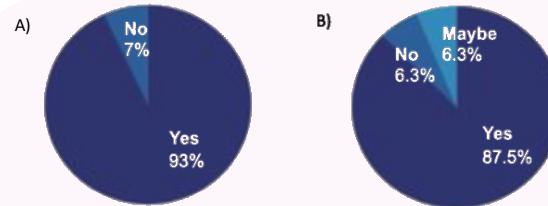


Figure 1. Pie charts of midwives' responses to a survey gauging their interest in opening a birth centre. A) represents the percent of midwives interested in the development of a London birth centre (n =16). B) represents midwives' likelihood, represented as percentages, of referring their patients to a birth centre if available (n=16).



Figure 2. Word map of keywords obtained in survey asking for London midwives' opinions on a birth centre (n = 16). Font size correlates to frequency of keyword in response.

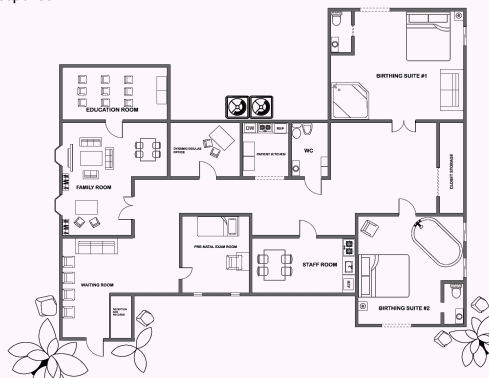


Figure 3. Proposed floor plan and design of future birth centre in London, Ontario on 874 Commissioners Rd E.

Impact

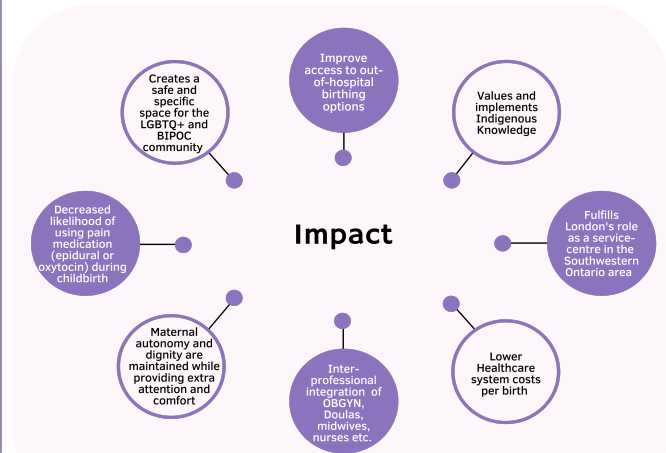


Figure 4. Mind map highlighting the aims of this project and the potential impact of a birth centre on the London, Ontario community.

Future Directions

- Form a coalition with local midwife and doula organizations
- Preset the motion to London's city council
- Obtain letter of endorsement to present to parliament
- Simultaneously, refine existing support systems in London and continue to identify evidence in favour of birth centre
- Present pitch to Ontario Provincial Government

Acknowledgements

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Literature Cited:

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2. Kozhimannil, K. B., Attanasio, L. B., Jou, J., Joarnt, L. K., Johnson, P. J., & Gjerdingen, D. K. (2014). Potential benefits of increased access to doula support during childbirth. *The American journal of managed care*, 20(8), e340-e352.