

Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers



Noteworthy: A Conversation with a CABC-Accredited Birth Center



Elizabeth Simmons, co-founder of The Birth Center of Boulder updated CABC Commissioner Kim Pekin on what's been happening at the birth center.

This is the next installment in the series, "Noteworthy: A Conversation with a CABC-Accredited Birth Center"

The Birth Center of Boulder is a freestanding birth center and women's health clinic in the heart of Boulder, Colorado. The birth center opened in 2014 and became accredited that same year.

Kim: Let's start by talking about why you decided to open the birth center.

Elizabeth: Marian Stonacek, Angela Stevens and I opened the birth center because the community kept asking for it. Over the years we had heard many times, "Why isn't there a birth center in Boulder?" We finally realized that the reason we were being asked is because we were supposed to open one. Also, for Angela, it was in response to the deep truth that birth and women are to be trusted. That is why our tagline is: Trust. Nurture. Honor. Birth."

Kim: What are you most proud of about your birth center?

Elizabeth: Two things come to mind. The first is that our birthing people are seen, trusted, and heard. We take time to build trust and relationships with our pregnant clients - and that deep relational experience is impactful not just for the birth but far beyond.

The second is the way in which we include partners in the pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. Watching a partner transition into a parent is one of the greatest joys - and we are honored that our space and birth care system allow that to happen.

Kim: Tell us about your client population.

Elizabeth: The most exciting shift in our client population of late is that we have secured a contract with Medicaid and can now serve those families.

Kim: Has your birth center practice changed how something is done at the hospital?



Elizabeth: Yes. Last year, we undertook a project with a DNP student to increase communication with hospital staff around transfers. We utilized a client information transfer tool to confirm that all our clients were receiving education around transfers. Then when a transfer occurred, a debrief tool was used between our team and the hospital team, and with the client. It has been so powerful to open up the conversation around transfer and to facilitate fluid, dynamic conversations with our local hospital.

Have an idea for a future newsletter topic? Let us know!



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Kim: What is your birth center's biggest challenge?

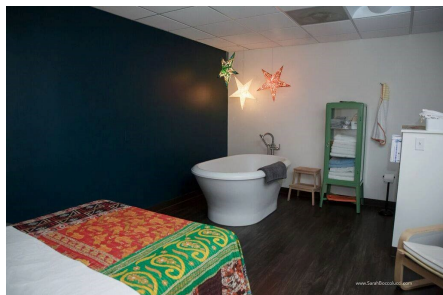
Elizabeth: Proper insurance reimbursement. I am chair of the AABC Industry Relations Committee, whose purpose is to push change at a national level. This is a very challenging area and needs to be addressed by CABC, AABC and all birth centers as one voice.

Kim: Why do you think it's important for your birth center to be CABC-accredited?

Elizabeth: Being accredited and anticipating the accreditation visit reminds us to look at the bigger picture and not just day to day operations. It's a great check that our P&Ps and clinical guidelines are updated and we are following the best practice guidelines.

Kim: Have you changed anything about your birth center or how you do things as a result of being CABC-accredited?

Elizabeth: So many things! I feel like every accreditation visit helps us adjust or shift or change something at our center. Possibly it's a small change - like around HIPAA compliance and email, or maybe a larger shift like how we organize our personnel folders. CABC has been very helpful in the areas of building and maintaining systems of organization.



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Kim: What do you think are the benefits of a fairly new midwife or a student midwife having experience in a birth center?

Elizabeth: Angela is very passionate about educating midwives in out-of-hospital birth so it was important to us that our birth center do its part. This year we started a fellowship program for new midwives. It has been a fantastic experience for the midwives and for our center. The new energy and education of the midwives is a great addition to our culture. And, the fellows get to train with some exceptional, experienced midwives.

Kim: What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about opening a birth center?

Elizabeth: Learn everything you can about insurance (insurance reimbursement practices, how to negotiate, appropriate reimbursement rates) and your break even. In the end, a birth center is a business and needs to be run as one.

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