

January 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

It was our great fortune to be cared for by Emily Hester, APRN CNM during our first pregnancy and the birth of our son, Jupiter. Prior to meeting with Emily, we were already dedicated to finding the best possible prenatal care that could be had in Lawrence. We were also dedicated to our plan to have an unmedicated home birth, provided the pregnancy went well.

After completing much research (Tabitha is a professional journalist with more than 15 years of research experience), we were more than comfortable with our decision to have prenatal care at home, with the exception of ultrasounds, and to have the birth at home as long as it progressed normally. We were not at all interested in ignoring the potential risks of childbirth or eschewing any medical advice, so it was important to us to hire a certified nurse midwife, rather than a lay midwife.

Couple that dedication with the intensity (and questions!) that new parents tend to have, and you can be sure that we had set a high bar for our care team. The level of care that Emily brought to our experience far exceeded our expectations. In addition, it was a great comfort to us to know that our midwife had the support of an obstetrician in Dr. Samantha Durland.

We did end up having a successful, though unexpected, collaboration with Dr. Durland. The pregnancy presented some *potential* complications (a concern about cholestasis that ended up being resolved), which lead to a situation during the final weeks that expanded our care team to include Dr. Durland, a perinatologist in Kansas City, a number of ultrasound techs (for the BPPs that Emily referred us to), and an acupuncturist in Lawrence. Emily facilitated these meetings and guided us expertly through all of them. She was also able to prescribe a medication for Tabitha. Ultimately, the concerns about cholestasis were resolved and we got the full support of both Emily and Dr. Durland to continue with our plan to have a home birth. We felt secure in our choice partly because we know that Emily is conservative as far as midwives go and never hesitates to transfer patients to the care of a hospital staff when necessary.

The birth was incredibly difficult but unbelievably wonderful. Emily and her care team (RN: Jen, Doula: Stefanie Olson) helped us explore many different birthing positions and techniques through the 16.5 hours of laboring. Jupiter Jude was eventually born naturally in the warm water of the birthing tub, and emerged healthy and perfect. Emily and Stefanie assisted us with nursing, which also went very well, and Tabitha healed and recovered quickly.

Though we had the beautiful home birth that many people seek, it was not without its medical "interventions." Tabitha was given IV antibiotics during labor because of a positive Group B Strep test, as well as IV fluids after several difficult and

dehydrating hours of laboring. Tabitha also needed some Pitocin to control bleeding after delivering the placenta. We believe that all of these interventions were helpful and important, and we are grateful for them. We feel that we were consulted and respected in making all of these decisions, none of which would have been available to us had we worked with a lay midwife.

The postpartum care provided by Emily was equally exceptional. Jupiter presented some weight gain issues about 3 weeks after he was born, and Emily's guidance again proved useful. We were admitted to Children's Mercy and the careful record-keeping that Emily had taken for us proved quite useful to the pediatricians we worked with there. Our primary physician remarked how grateful he was that we had been working with such a conscientious practitioner. Emily even spent some time visiting us during our week-long stay in the hospital. In this and many other ways, we think the postpartum care she provided was beyond anything one might be reasonably expect.

Being able to hire a nurse midwife provided us with first-rate care, as well as the kind of birth experience that we wanted. We don't think it is possible to emphasize enough how fully satisfied we were the entire experience. Hopefully the fact that we have hired Emily again to deliver our baby girl, due this March, will testify to our confidence in her abilities and professionalism.

We are grateful that Emily turned out to be so skilled and wonderful, but more than that, we are forever grateful that we had the privilege of choice in the first place to be able to hire an educated and experienced midwife who was certified to attend a home birth. We believe it is important that all families have access to the kind of quality medical care that we enjoyed with our first pregnancy and are currently enjoying with our second.

We hope you will consider the excellent service that was provided by Emily as an APRN CNM in Kansas, and support the passage of SB #69 to ensure her practice can stay active and provide more CNMs the opportunity to care for women and families in our state.

Sincerely,

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