



MATERNITY SERVICES

Caring For Babies and Moms Too

Giving birth to her son Evan was a peaceful experience for Karlene Melero.

Shown: Karlene Melero chose Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset to deliver her second son Evan this past March because of their reputation for providing personalized care, not only to the newborn baby, but to the Mom and Dad too.

From the moment Mrs. Melero arrived to the maternity unit at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset (RWJ Somerset) on March 12, she felt well cared for, physically and emotionally. "The maternity unit was quiet and peaceful, and the nurses were personable and professional," said the 34-year-old Piscataway resident.

Labor and delivery nurse Salimma Joseph, RNC, worked with Gregory Hirsch, MD, to guide Mrs. Melero during labor until Evan was born. "Our calm environment means we can pay more attention to our patients," said Dr. Hirsch, who has been working with Ms. Joseph and other nurses at RWJ Somerset for many years and is Vice Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at RWJ Somerset.

To make sure that mom and baby were okay, Ms. Joseph stayed with Mrs. Melero after her shift ended. She got Mrs. Melero and her husband Eric something to eat, even though the hospital's kitchen was closed. "She and the other nurses took care of all of us, not just the baby," said Mrs. Melero.

While most hospitals have separate nurses for moms and their babies, at RWJ Somerset, one mother/baby nurse cares for both. "We provide holistic care to help new families get off to the right start," said Lynn Freeland, MSN, RNC, Assistant Nurse Manager of Maternity Services. This was a very different experience than the birth of Mrs. Melero's first baby, 5-year-old Ian, at another New Jersey hospital.

There, many nurses came in and out of the room during labor. After Ian was born, Mrs. Melero felt like they forgot about her and just took care of the baby.

"What sets us apart is the professionalism and dedication of our staff to provide the safest, most personalized delivery experience for our families," said Jennifer Irving, BSN, RNC-ob, Director of Maternity Services at RWJ Somerset. For example, Mrs. Melero chose to breastfeed Evan. Her mother/baby nurse taught her how to do this, and was always available. If Mrs. Melero had needed more help, the nurse would have brought in a lactation counselor. RWJ Somerset has one of the highest rates for breastfeeding in the region. All maternity nurses are trained in breastfeeding and 90 percent of nurses are certified in their specialty.

Nurses have plenty of time to care for moms and their babies, and to teach moms and dads how to safely care for their babies at home. Each nurse takes care of just three or four moms and babies, instead of up to six moms or babies like other hospitals. Childbirth educators also teach new moms and their families about caring for the baby. New moms can call the nurses with questions after they leave the hospital. RWJ Somerset also offers community education classes for parents.

"It was so much better at RWJ Somerset than my previous experience," said Mrs. Melero. "They even checked to see if I ordered breakfast, and provided breakfast for my husband." The hospital is also easy to

get to, which helps dads who may be going back and forth between the hospital and home to care for other kids. After Mrs. Melero went home, Ms. Joseph called to see how she was doing.

Board-certified obstetricians, neonatologists (pediatricians specializing in newborn care), and anesthesiologists are available in house 24/7 in case of emergencies. The nursery provides Level II intermediate neonatal care, when necessary, for some high-risk pregnancies and newborn issues. These same neonatologists also care for babies at RWJ New Brunswick's Level III perinatal center, and can expedite seamless transfers there in the rare cases when this is necessary.

"Many women who have delivered elsewhere come here for their next birth and love it. We help the woman and her family have the experience they want to have, and give them the education they need to be prepared to take care of their baby in a safe manner," said Freeland.

Visit www.rwjh.edu or call 1-888-MD-RWJUH.



Shown: Gregory Hirsch, MD, Vice Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, has been working with the nurses and delivering babies on the maternity unit for many years and encourages patients to deliver here.

HAVING YOUR BABY AT RWJ?

Prenatal and Post-partum Yoga Class

New and expectant mothers build strength and flexibility and relieve stress. Exercises are specially modified for pregnant women and those who recently had a baby.

Participants should bring their own yoga mat and water. Medical clearance is required by a physician to participate.

Thursdays beginning July 2

1 to 2:15 p.m.

\$10 per class

To pre-register and confirm the location, please call 908-704-3766 or register online at www.rwjh.edu/somersetevents.

Childbirth Education Class

Three-session class begins Tuesdays: June 30, July 7 and 14, August 11, 18 and 25

6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Maternal Child Health Conference Room, \$125