



You Are Not Alone

A Multipronged Approach to
Family - Centered Care

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About Me



Dr. Elise A. Somers

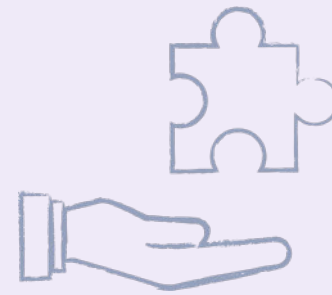
- Volunteer and Board Member at Life Center
- Mom to three beautiful children
- Physician Assistant and educator at Slippery Rock University
- Clinical experience in primary care, general surgery, urology, and oncology
- Passion for women's health and pediatric care
- Doctoral work in sex education

Session Objectives



Analysis

- Identify gaps in rural care for pregnancy that focuses on a holistic approach to care



Strategy

- Propose non - medical social support for individuals and families in need of help to close gaps in rural care as it relates to pregnancy and children



Implementation

- Discuss the benefits of a multipronged approach to education and support in closing the gaps of rural care as it relates to pregnancy and children

Gaps in Care



Access to maternal care has decreased due to closures of some rural hospital obstetrical services.

- 23 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties (all rural) currently have no hospital offering labor and delivery services (Danailova, H., 2026)

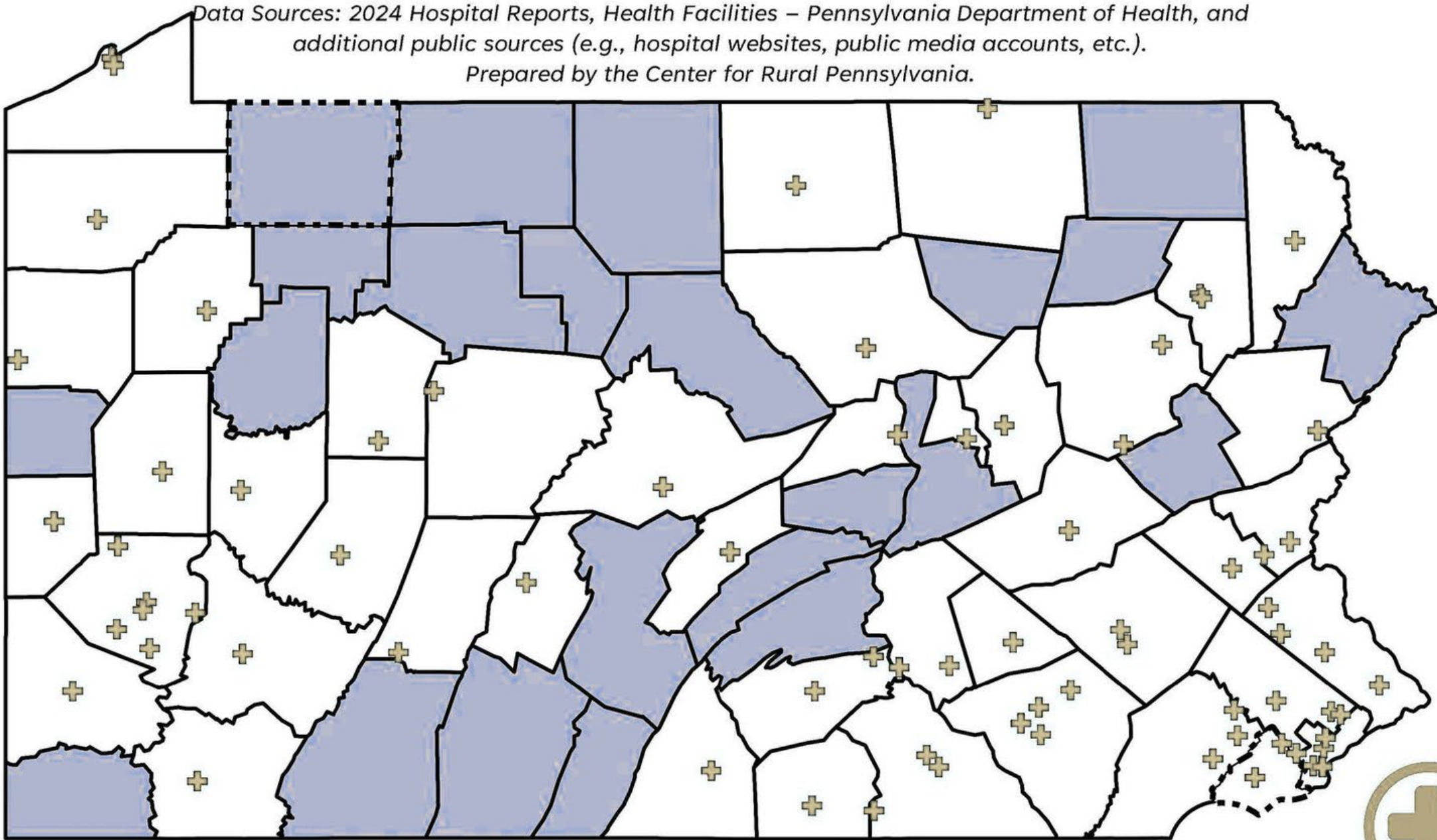
March of Dimes Statistics:

- 12.4% of women in Pennsylvania had no birthing hospital within 30 minutes compared to 9.7% nationwide
- 15.6% of birthing people in Pennsylvania received inadequate prenatal care, greater than the U.S. rate of 14.8%

Updated Locations of Hospitals with a Labor and Delivery Unit in Pennsylvania, 2026

Note: This map reflects the closure of the Labor and Delivery Unit at Warren General Hospital in Warren County and the complete closure of Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Delaware County.

*Data Sources: 2024 Hospital Reports, Health Facilities – Pennsylvania Department of Health, and additional public sources (e.g., hospital websites, public media accounts, etc.).
Prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.*



Statewide = 75 Hospitals with a Labor and Delivery Unit

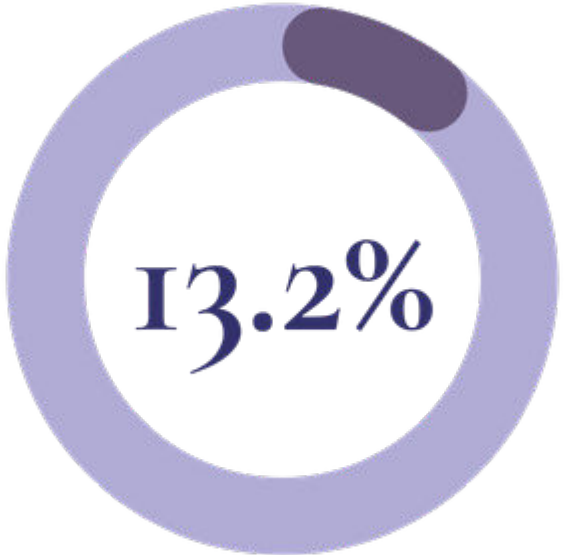
- Hospital with Labor and Delivery Unit
- County with At Least One Labor and Delivery Unit
- County with No Labor and Delivery Unit
- County with a Reduction in Labor and Delivery Services Since May 2025



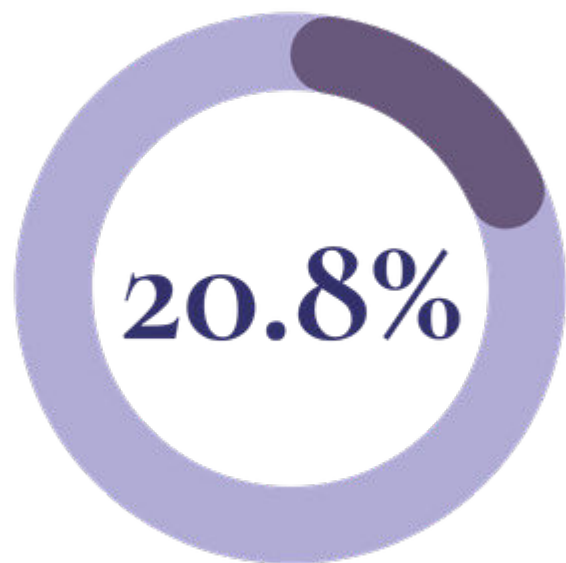
Venango County Statistics



2024 Population
49,800



2024 Poverty rate
13.2%
(2.65% 1-year increase)



2025 Children
living in poverty
20.8%



2024 Median
household income
\$61,522

Life Center Statistics



	2024	2025	2026 (through March)
Client Appointments	746	986	287
Show Rate	72%	67%	59%
New Clients	19	34	9
Births	11	12	9
Volunteer Hours	1,368	1,548	381
Men's Ministry Visits	5	47	8



Life Center

You are not alone



What Do We Do?

- We're a pregnancy resource center providing support from pregnancy until child is three years old
- Free pregnancy tests
- Ultrasound referrals
- Counseling referrals
- Education
 - Women's health
 - Pregnancy
 - Parenting
 - Life Skills

Who Does It?

- Executive Director
- Client Advocate
- Community Connections Advocate
- Social Media & Website Manager
- Office and Program Manager
- Board of Directors
- Volunteers
 - Consultants
 - Boutique workers
 - Men's Ministry
 - Childcare for events
 - Community members

Our Clients

We serve the underserved of the community:

- Addition –drugs, alcohol
- Low socioeconomic status
- Abused as children
- Single-parent or no -parent homes
- Dropped out of high school
- Can't drive
- Homeless
- Teenagers



Life Center Goals

To Equip Families in:

- Parenting
- Relationships
- Nutrition
- Spirituality
- Finances
- Employment/Life Skills



Bi-weekly Meetings

During Meeting:

- Video
- Discussion
- Prayer
- Shop Boutique / Get needed resources

Goals it Supports:

- Parenting
- Relationships
- Nutrition
- Spirituality
- Finances
- Employment/Life Skills



Earn While You Learn

BrightCourse Resources

- Videos
- Worksheets to complete during video
- Homework
- Factsheet
- Discussion Sheet
- Spiritual Page



Earn While You Learn Topics

- Pregnancy Essentials
- Pregnancy Options
- Pregnancy Milestones
- Labor, Delivery, and First Weeks
- First Year
- Toddler
- Parenting
- One Heart, Two Homes
- Life Skills
- Special Circumstances
- Love, Relationships, and Sexual Wholeness
- Positive Partnerships
- Bible Study
- Being a Father



EWYL Sample Video

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling and holding a baby up in the air. The baby is wearing a white headband and a white diaper. The background is bright and out of focus.

From
Pregnancy
to
Parenting

FREE classes for moms
who want to grow!

BrightCourse

Monthly Blessing Bags

Practical Monthly Give Away

- Sunscreen, bubbles, ball, educational pamphlet on sun safety
- Cleaning supplies
- Laundry soap
- Personal hygiene items

Donated by local groups, students, or supported by grant funding.



Family Connections Events

Monthly Family Gatherings

- Meal served family style
- Childcare provided
- Discussion around the table
- Split up into men and women for more discussion
- Community connections

Goals Supported:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Parenting | ☒ Spirituality |
| ☒ Relationships | ☒ Finances |
| ☒ Nutrition | ☒ Employment / Life Skills |



Family Connections Topics



Monthly Family Gatherings

- Common Childhood Illness and Wellness (brochure printed)
- Budgeting
- Nutrition –WIC Infant and Toddler
- Magic 1,2,3–for discipline

Goals Supported:

- ☒ Five Love Languages: relationships
- ☒ Early Head Start: as a resource
- ☒ Stories that Changed Lives: former client shared her story from being trafficked, unplanned pregnancy, to keeping her baby with support from the Life Center
- ☒ 2026 focus is on mental health in collaboration with With You Counseling

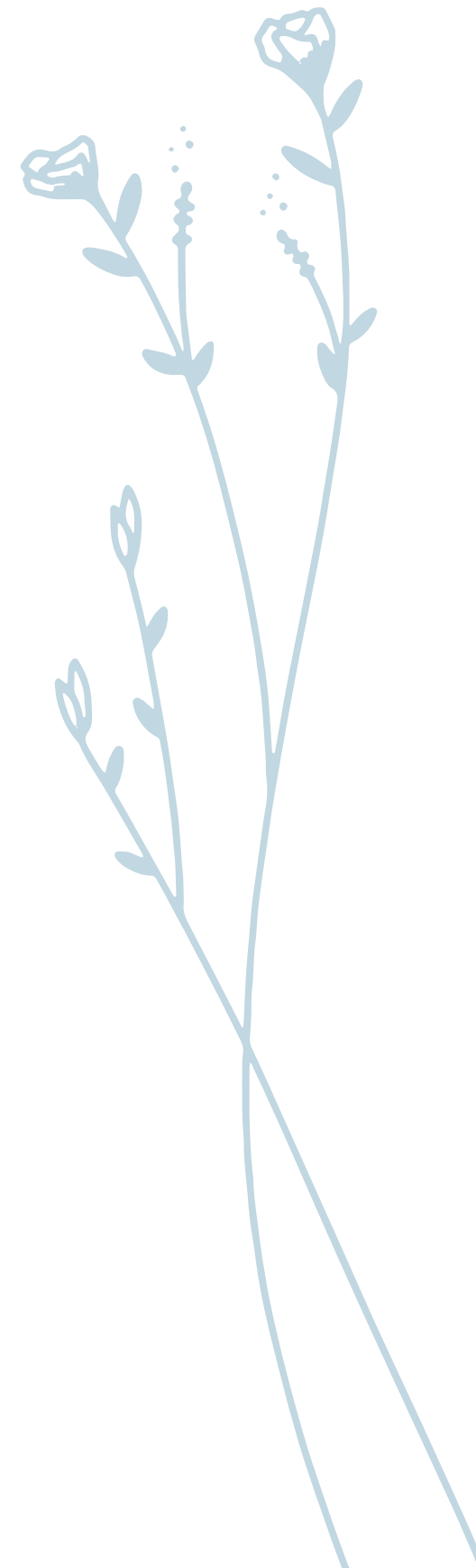
Men's Ministry

During Meeting:

- Video-based
- Discussion
- Supportive Environment
- Prayer

Support Leads to Success!

- Employment
- GED
- Getting Married
- Connecting with a Church



Counseling Services

We partner with a local counseling group – With You Counseling –who promises to get our clients in with timely counseling.

- Believes in holistic care
- Dedicated to helping people improve their quality of life and overall wellness
- Stands firm on building relationships and using effective treatment
- Supports our Family Connections nights



Cooking Connections

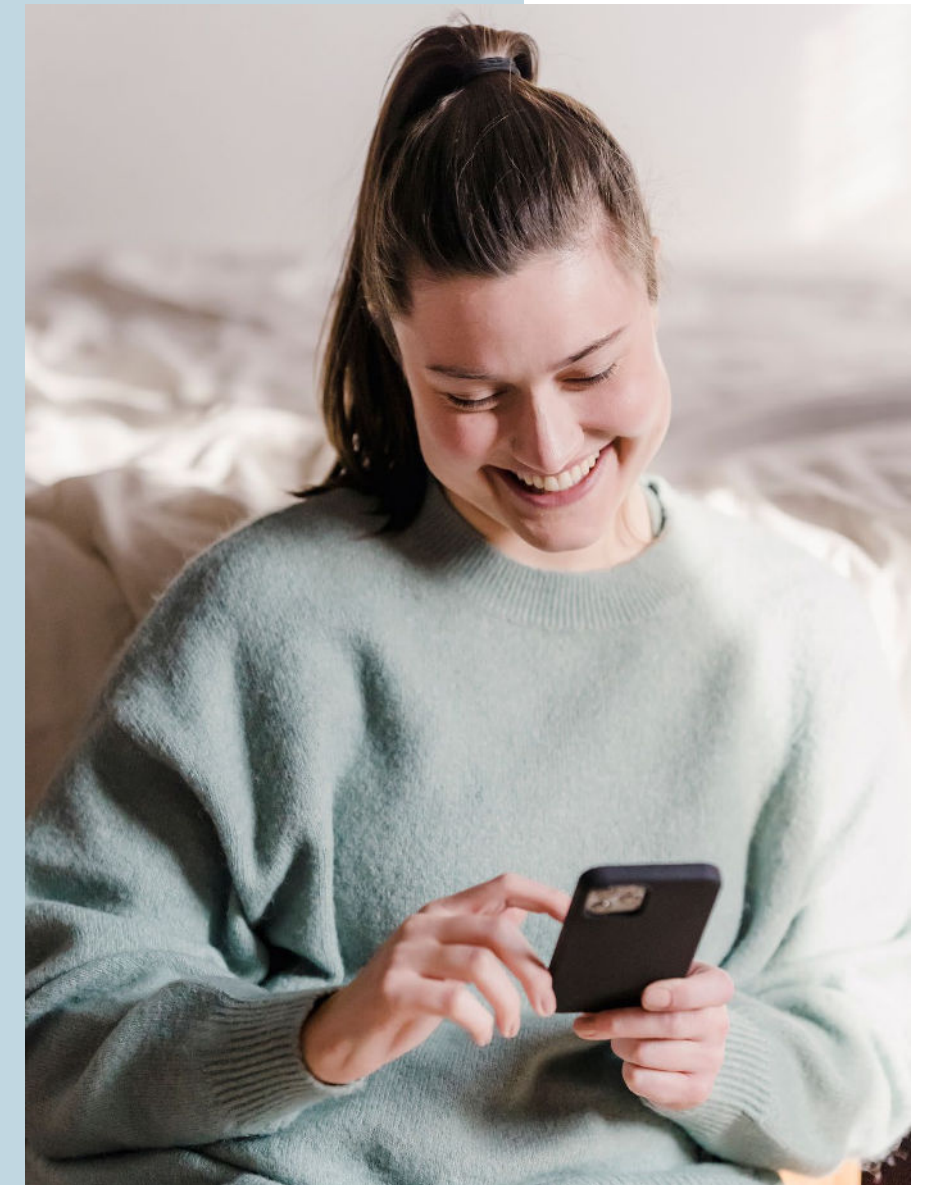
- Monthly
- Taught by a former client
- Teaching cooking skills
- Simple and affordable meals
- Make it and eat it
- Send home supplies and a gift to support their cooking journey
- Example: January 2026 made potato soup and a dessert to enjoy together then went home with the ingredients to recreate it at home



Moms Facebook Group

Connecting with other Life Center moms

- Stay up-to-date on center events and news
- Connect with other women
- Parenting tips, resources and support
- Ask questions and share your journey
- Be encouraged
- 56 members
- Private and confidential



Life Center Moms Group

- Monday -Wednesday moms can hangout at the center in our downstairs
- Come and have coffee with other moms from the center
- Connect with other moms



Freezer Meal Ministry

- Bless new moms and families experiencing food insecurities
- Moms who have just had a baby
- Families meeting hardships
- Families whose kids are sick
- Donated through women's groups and Individuals



Sexual Risk Avoidance

Educates teens on the health advantages of delayed sexual activity to reduce unplanned pregnancies and STDs.



Infant Loss Support

- Partnership with Emma's Footprints
- Walking side -by- side with pregnancy and infant loss families
- Emma's Footprints serves Erie and Pittsburgh, PA; Boston, MA; and Kasson, MN
- Monthly topics include
 - *What We Wish They Knew*
 - *Grief is Love*
 - *Say it out Loud*
 - *Grief Feels Like*
 - *Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness*
 - *You are Important*
- The Life Center offers a spiritual component



Why is the Life Center Successful?



We equip, empower, and educate families



We save lives by walking with families when they feel most alone



We cherish life, but know that families who have had infant loss need support



We love each person who walks in the door right where they are





Staff Testimonials

“Family Connections helps to build relationships that is the glue that holds it together.”

“It’s the longevity of the time to make the connection. Gives us enough time for them to feel like family.”



Client Testimonials

“This entire experience has brought me back to God, going to church regularly and actually enjoying it and looking forward it, and given me a whole renewed hope for my future. Chris is the best...but truly every single one of those women have a gift.”

Client Testimonials

“The ladies who work and volunteer here are absolutely amazing and helpful in any area you are looking for help in...I highly recommend them to any moms struggling.”

“The volunteers are amazing! They help people with their kids in more ways than one. It’s like family whenever you walk through the door. You’re not judged or ignored, you’re loved like you’re part of the family.”

“I just want to say thank you and love you all! Thank you for lifiting me up on hard days and never judging me. We are grateful for the time and resources you offer us. Thank you so much.”

“The Life Center and the people are wonderful! They are wonderful to talk to and have been a great help in my life and have become very close and and dear to me. They have made my struggles that much easier and I really appreciate each and every one of them.”



References

Danailova, H., The state's 'maternity deserts' are reaching a crisis point as rural hospitals continue to close childbirth services. City & State Pennsylvania. March 4, 2026.

<https://www.cityandstatepa.com/policy/2026/03/states-maternity-deserts-are-reaching-crisis-point-rural-hospitals-continue-close-childbirth-services/411884/>

<https://www.wvia.org/news/local/2026-03-08/center-for-rural-pa-finds-states-maternity-health-desert-growing-as-23-counties-are-without-labor-and-delivery-hospital-units-map-of-missing-labor-delivery>



Questions



Thank you



Continuing Education Information

Accreditation Statement:

In support of improving patient care, the University of Pittsburgh is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Physician (CME)

The University of Pittsburgh School designates this live activity for a maximum of 6.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits . Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nursing (CNE)

The maximum number of hours awarded for this Continuing Nursing Education activity is 6.75 contact hours.

Social Work (ASWB)

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, University of Pittsburgh is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. State and provincial regulatory boards have the final authority to determine whether an individual course may be accepted for continuing education credit. University of Pittsburgh maintains responsibility for this course. Social workers completing this course receive 6.75 continuing education credits.

Physician Assistant (AAPA)

The University of Pittsburgh has been authorized by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for 6.75 AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.

Psychologist (APA)

Continuing Education (CE) credits for psychologists are provided through the co-sponsorship of the American Psychological Association (APA) Office of Continuing Education in Psychology (CEP). The APA CEP Office maintains responsibility for the content of the programs.

Other health care professionals: Other health care professionals will receive a certificate of attendance confirming the number of contact hours commensurate with the extent of participation in this activity.

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