On June 10, at 8:37 a.m., Brian and Jenna Kupferschmid welcomed their beautiful baby boy into the world. Brooks weighed in at 8 pounds, 20¼ inches long, and made Brian and Jenna parents for the first time.

“Everything went so smoothly,” Brian recalls of the day his son was born. “It was such a rewarding, yet suspenseful day. Thankfully, all of the staff at Perham Health knew exactly what to do.”

The first time parents credit the ease of Jenna’s pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum experience to the hospital’s Obstetrics Medical Home program and the high quality, well-coordinated care they received. While pregnancy and the transition to becoming new parents is generally quite an adjustment, they say the program did an excellent job preparing them for what to expect.

Perham Health’s OB Medical Home program was designed with the goal of helping expectant mothers with all aspects of pregnancy. This innovative offering promotes a team-based approach to care, where patients are treated as the central member of their care team.

Early on in a woman’s pregnancy, she has the opportunity to meet with an RN OB health coach to discuss her pregnancy. A personalized medical home team will then be established. This team will include the expectant mom, her primary care provider, and her RN health coach – as well as other health care professionals and staff at Perham Health. The team may also include trusted family and friends who the woman has selected to play a role in her health care.

For the Kupferschmids, their first OB Medical Home experience was a visit with Megan Hemmelgarn, OB Medical Home Coach at Perham Health. “When we first found out we were pregnant, I really had no clue what the first steps were,” Jenna admits. “So, I called Perham Health and was transferred to Megan. She was able to answer all the questions we had, told me approximately how far along I was, and then led me in the direction of what to do next as far as nutrition and physical activities. She was extremely helpful to me as a new, nervous, and anxious mom.”

“Pregnancy is such a beautiful gift, but it can also be a very vulnerable time for mothers,” Hemmelgarn notes. “My job is to be a support person for the family and help guide them through the pregnancy.”

She further explains her role as an OB Medical Home coach, “I get to meet with the patient when she is nervous and excited after having received a positive pregnancy test. During our visit, we discuss her health history and any previous obstetric history, set goals for the pregnancy, and I provide a great deal of education to hopefully decrease some of her worries or fears.”

Hemmelgarn then stays in contact with the moms throughout their pregnancy to make sure all questions and concerns are answered in a timely manner. Having access to educational information and addressing issues as quickly as possible results in fewer emergency room and OB visits and hospital stays.

As a first time mom, Jenna says she had a lot of questions. Whenever a new question or concern came up, she would either call Hemmelgarn directly or leave a message for her through Perham Health’s online MyChart service. “I would, within minutes most times, get a call from Megan explaining what things might be or, if she thought the issue was concerning, she would get me scheduled for an appointment. She made everything we did extremely easy and less work for us,” Jenna says.

New parents Brian and Jenna Kupferschmid say their pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum experience couldn’t have went more smoothly. The couple credits Perham Health’s OB Medical Home program with preparing them for what to expect at each new stage.
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“While my doctor, Dr. Andrea Westby, took great care of us, she is understandably busy. This is where Megan really stepped in,” she continues. “We never had to wait for our questions to get answered. Megan would go talk to my doctor and then communicate with us what Dr. Westby thought. Megan seemed to always be one step ahead of us with questions we potentially had.”

At the beginning of every trimester, Hemmelgarn called Jenna to touch base with her and explain what she could expect during the new trimester. They discussed how big Jenna’s baby was, the rate he was growing at, and common things to be feeling at that point in the pregnancy.

“At some of my doctor appointments, Megan would also make a point to come see Brian and I to see how we were doing and just to chat,” Jenna adds. “We could tell that she was truly involved in this journey with us.”

She says her experience with Dr. Westby was just as positive. “Dr. Westby is great!” Jenna mentions. “We had the best experience with her as our doctor and we would never go to another one. She took the time during our appointments to get to know us and answer any questions and concerns we had. She also did a great job remembering what had happened at our previous appointments and previous conversations that we had. This made us feel like she really cared.”

In addition to the excellent care Jenna received from Hemmelgarn and Dr. Westby, she also appreciated the opportunity to attend labor and delivery classes through Perham Health. The classes, taught by RN Brenda Johnson, helped prepare the couple for what to expect throughout the pregnancy, delivery, and after bringing Brooks home from the hospital.

“When I first brought up the labor and delivery class to Brian, he was not so thrilled to go. I can imagine he is not alone in this,” Jenna jokes. “However, once we went to our first class, he was very intrigued and found out that there was a lot more to learn before we had the baby. The classes did a great job of teaching us about the steps before delivery, during delivery, and after.”

In fact, while his wife was in labor, Brian ended up referencing some of the class materials to help him determine how far along she was. He helped Jenna figure out how to properly measure her contractions. Once his wife was in the delivery room, Brian says he was able to use a few of the coaching techniques he’d learned at the classes.

By the time Jenna was admitted to the hospital, she was already quite far along with labor. “Having went over everything ahead of time and having the information with me from the classes really helped me stay calm rather than getting nervous,” Brian recalls. Once Brooks was born, Jenna’s OB Medical Home team continued to care for both her and her newborn baby. “After we had Brooks, I felt like we were in great hands as new parents. We were taught how to give him a bath, the correct way to breastfeed, how to swaddle him, put him in a car seat, and more. If he was up all night crying (which he was both nights) they made sure to give us a break and took him out of our room for a few hours so we were assured some sleep. It was much appreciated!”

Brian mentions how impressed he was with the positive attitude of everyone on staff and the friendly environment that created in the hospital. “It couldn’t have been better. It was awesome. I wouldn’t have wanted to have our baby any other place. The staff, the rooms, and all of the amenities were so great. It made it fun to have the baby at Perham Health. I feel like anybody having a baby somewhere else would be getting second best,” he says, then jokes around a bit saying, “We’ll be back.”

After closely following Jenna’s entire pregnancy, meeting Brooks for the first time was a special moment for Hemmelgarn as well. She explains, “One of the greatest joys in my job is being able to visit the family in the hospital holding their new baby. I get to witness the anxiety on the face of a mother at her first visit. Then, I get to see the joy and confidence of her holding her newborn. It is a full-circle moment for me. I truly enjoy getting to know the families I work with. It is so fun to be a part of this journey with them.”

From the moment she found out she was pregnant all the way through the birth of her son, Jenna found the information, support, and medical assistance she needed through OB Medical Home. “I would 100 percent encourage any first time, soon-to-be mom to go through Perham Health,” Jenna concludes. “From my first phone call to Megan, to the wonderful care from Dr. Westby, to the hospital’s huge delivery rooms with an awesome jacuzzi...we didn’t want to leave!”

Jenna and Brooks are pictured with OB Medical Home Coach Megan Hemmelgarn (on left) and Dr. Andrea Westby (on right) at Perham Health. Dr. Westby and Hemmelgarn guided Jenna through her pregnancy as a part of her personalized care team.
Welcome Dr. Kailey Witt

Perham Health is pleased to introduce Kailey Witt, MD, family medicine, as the newest member of its healthcare team. Dr. Witt joined Perham Health this month.

Dr. Witt is a Wahpeton, North Dakota, native. She attended the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, receiving her undergraduate degree. Dr. Witt remained at UND enrolling in its medical school and recently completed her family medicine residency at Sioux Falls Family Medicine, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

“I enjoy caring for people of all ages and hearing their story,” said Dr. Witt. “I like building relationships with my patients and developing mutual trust. I believe in involving my patients in their medical needs and, together, making decisions for their care.”

Dr. Witt is married to her husband, Bill. Together, they have a one-year-old daughter, Bailey and a chocolate lab, Cooper. In her spare time, Dr. Witt loves spending time on the lakes and enjoys reading, spending time with her family, cooking, and golfing.

“I’m excited to settle down in Perham and to develop relationships with my patients,” Dr. Witt adds.

Appointments with Dr. Witt can be made by calling the Perham Health Clinic at (218) 347-1200.

3D mammography now offered at Perham Health

With October being National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Perham Health is proud to now offer patients the option of 3D mammography.

The new 3D Breast Tomosynthesis is a mammography imaging technology that creates a more detailed image of the breast. The machine takes nine images around the compressed breast to create a three-dimensional image.

“This imaging technique is designed to separate the tissues and to reduce the overlapping of structures which is a limiting factor in standard two-dimensional mammography, especially for patients with very dense breast tissue,” explains Tara Nelson, Mammography Lead Technologist at Perham Health.

Perham Health first began offering 3D mammography on September 17. Patients are able to decide whether or not they would like to have a 3D mammogram, as most insurance providers do not cover this new technology.

Prior to coming in for a mammogram, patients are encouraged to check with their insurance provider to see if a 3D mammogram will be covered. Even if the 3D mammogram is not covered, patients can still opt to utilize the new technology, but they will be responsible for the additional charge.

“The exam time is a little bit longer because we need to take the standard 2D images followed by the 3D images,” Nelson explains. “The patient is in compression a little bit longer, but with this new technology we hope we can reduce the number of patient call backs for additional imaging due to overlapping of structures.”

Offering the option of 3D mammography is an excellent example of how Perham Health is committed to providing patients with the best medical technology available. “Patients seem very excited to try the new 3D mammography,” concludes Nelson.

Figure 1 shows a digital image created with standard 2D mammography technology.

Figure 2 shows a much more detailed image of the same breast that was obtained using 3D Breast Tomosynthesis. This innovative mammography imaging technology clearly shows a suspicious lesion that was poorly defined with the 2D image.
just for WOMEN

Tuesday, October 13
5-8 p.m.
Perham High School
200 5th St SE

FREE ADMISSION
For more information or to register, please call 218.347.1640 or email information@perhamhealth.org

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