

CLAREMORE ASCENSION ST. JOHN CLINIC TO BEGIN MIDWIFERY CARE IN APRIL

By Emmet Jamieson

Starting in April, two certified nurse midwives will offer their services one day a week at the Claremore Ascension St. John clinic.

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Carla May, CNM

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Meggie Gaskins, communications manager, said the midwives have been seeing patients at the health system's Owasso clinic since last December. Gaskins said patients can call 918-274-5555 to schedule an appointment with the midwives or Dr. Brian Stephens, OB-GYN.

Ascension St. John's new CNMs, [Carla May](#) and [Kathryn Martin](#), both "caught" babies at Claremore Indian Hospital before it was turned over to the Cherokee Nation. The tribe cut inpatient services, electing instead to offer obstetrician care through a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with Hillcrest Claremore, which lacks midwifery.

"Midwifery care in Oklahoma has traditionally been in the tribal and the Indian Health Service hospitals," May said. "More hospital systems are coming on board with midwifery care because they know that women like having that option. ... It's really exciting to be able to offer that option to our patients here locally."

Both midwives and OB-GYNs work with women before, during and after their pregnancies, May said, but they fill different roles.

OB-GYNs are surgical physicians equipped to handle high-risk pregnancies. May said she calls on Stephens, the OB-GYN, if one of her patients has a serious medical issue.

May said midwives offer holistic, one-on-one care and do much more than help deliver babies.

"We take care of women from the time they first start having cycles all the way through menopause," May said. "We also do prenatal care, and we also catch babies and see women in the postpartum period and follow up with those things."

According to a 2024 study by the National Center for Health Statistics, 6% of pregnant women in Oklahoma didn't seek prenatal care until their third trimester or didn't receive such care at all.

May said women should look into prenatal care as soon as they know they are pregnant, especially it is their first time. She said OB-GYNs, midwives and family practitioners can help women cope with the discomforts of pregnancy and monitor their progress.

More than half of Oklahoma's 77 counties have no prenatal care providers or hospitals with obstetric care, according to a 2023 report by [March of Dimes](#).

"We are proud to be able to offer these services in Claremore so that people aren't having to come to Owasso or to Tulsa, that we're able to offer this care in the community," Gaskins said.