

My experience with Direct-Entry Midwives/Certified Professional Midwives was pleasant and friendly, until my baby died during birth.

The team of midwives allowed me to continue laboring despite no signs of progress, no desire to push, and after membranes had been ruptured for well over 24 hours. They did not properly address my overwhelming dehydration due to severe vomiting for much of my 48 hour labor. Though they charted “failure to progress”, “baby is tiring”, “tight fit”, they did not perceive an emergency was on hand and to call for transport. They left the decision making to me, despite the fact that I was tired after days of labor coupled with non-stop vomiting, as well as delirious from no sleep, and unable to make rational decisions. In my chart, I signed a form stating that I UNDERSTOOD that I would be transferred to hospital in the event of “failure to progress”. This form essentially means I would comply with their decision to transport, yet they never made that call.

They convinced me to allow a fellow LDM and ND to use a vacuum extractor to help deliver my baby. No proper informed consent or risk/benefit talk was given. All I remember the ND/LDM saying was that the suction cup may leave a mark on my child’s head. After two failed attempts, the ND/LDM left my birth without further discussion. I was left to labor for 4+ additional hours.

My midwives failed to adequately chart my labor. The only charted one of two vacuum extractor attempts. They hinted at shoulder dystocia (writing “shoulder?” in my chart), but neither confirmed nor denied its presence. Shoulder dystocia also has implications in any subsequent labor and delivery. When, during my second pregnancy, my CNMs at Legacy retrieved my chart from the birth center, there was no mention of possible shoulder dystocia. The LDMs did not give my full chart to my CNMs at Legacy, opting to give them a one page typed “birth summary” of my labor and my vitals for each prenatal visit. THAT IS ALL. This birth summary also mentioned that I requested new midwives at the end of my labor; this is a complete and utter fabrication. My midwives told me that were tired and wanted some rest, thus they were going to call in for back up. My child was born before new midwives arrived.

I also remember one of my midwives mentioning the possible presence of meconium during my labor, yet it was not charted.

Fetal heart tones were not found some 10-12 minutes prior to delivery. My child was delivered without a pulsing umbilical cord and with no breath. No ambulance was called by any of my midwives or apprentices. My friend, present for most of my labor, was the one to call 911. By this time, I had bled out profusely, was retaining my placenta and had gone into shock. Yet, when the ambulance showed up they were first detained in the birth center office, and not allowed to my room. Secondly, my midwives told them that the situation was under control. There was nothing to be done for my child, and I was OK. They convinced me and my husband to send the paramedics away.

Only after I started to lose consciousness did my midwives consent to call the hospital for an ambulance. They called a specific doctor at a specific hospital; now I know that this particular hospital does not report out of hospital infant death to the state.

The lead midwife lied to the transferring doctors about my situation. She reported that I had labored for 4-5 hours and that my stillborn daughter was DELIVERED via vacuum extractor. Total and utter lies, yet again.

At the hospital, I had a surgery to remove my placenta and received 4 blood transfusions. Had my midwives successfully removed my placenta at the birth center (by pulling on it, which they tried to do), I certainly would have bled out. When the doctors removed my placenta I passed large blood clots; luckily I was already hooked up to life saving blood at the time. In addition, my bladder was severely damaged by my labor and I could not urinate for a month without the use of a catheter.

Placental pathology reports showed that I had developed serious infections during my labor: chorioamnionitis and funisitis. These infections arise from prolonged labor and rupture of membranes. The lead midwife responsible for my care lied to me directly when I asked her at my 6 week postpartum checkup what “chorioamnionitis” meant. She told me it was normal, and that it meant aged placenta.

The OHLA investigation process has been nerve wracking. As of yet, this process has dragged on for over a year and a half, though the OHLA promised a timely investigation due to the “severity” of my case. The interview process with the investigator and “subject matter expert” (a midwife), was humiliating. The SME proceeded to question my recollection of events in front of the investigator. The interview process was meant to be an information gathering exercise and not a trial of my memory. The midwife justified my midwife’s falsifications of record to the hospital as a mistake on the part of the hospital, and NOT a lie on the part of my midwife. She also asked if I was sure I asked my midwife about “chorioamnionitis” and not some other word--when in fact, I was very clear about my asking specifically about chorioamnionitis.