

between the governor and the Legislature.”

Aspirus’ move to close labor and delivery unit in Upper Peninsula draws outcry

Aspirus Health’s move to end labor and delivery services at a hospital in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula is drawing outcry from lawmakers and employees concerned about long distances patients may have to travel to Wisconsin hospitals to have babies.

Aspirus Ironwood Hospital and Clinics, which is near the Wisconsin border, will end labor and delivery services Dec. 31, according to a statement. Despite recruitment efforts, Aspirus hasn’t been able to secure a full maternal care team in Ironwood. The hospital will still offer prenatal and postnatal care, and its emergency department will handle urgent labor and delivery needs.

“This change will align our services with the region’s evolving needs while ensuring we can sustain comprehensive maternal care,” said Natalie Seaber, president of Aspirus’ Michigan region.

The Michigan Nurses Association warned the move poses risks, given long travel times for care, and said it comes after Aspirus ended delivery services at another **hospital** in the Upper Peninsula and closed a different hospital, **replacing** it with a clinic.

“It’s just body blow after body blow by Aspirus, with no regard to the fact that they’re leaving our community without the care they need,” said Ashley Thompson, an obstetrics nurse at the Ironwood hospital.

Four Michigan lawmakers **representing** the Upper Peninsula were upset too, as Aspirus declined \$1.2 million in state funding to expand OB-GYN services in Ironwood.

“This is a very bitter pill to swallow,” said Republican Rep. Dave Prestin.

Aspirus said that accepting “taxpayer dollars to temporarily prop up an inappropriate care model would not have been responsible.”

Vos announces four new legislative task forces



Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, said Tuesday his chamber will have four legislative task forces this fall, including one focused on elder services.

Rep. Patrick Snyder, R-Weston, will chair the Assembly's effort to improve elder care. He said at a **press conference** that he'd like to focus on social isolation, helping older adults age at home and addressing abuse.

Another task force, led by Rep. Lindee Brill, R-Sheboygan Falls, will focus on protecting kids.

Rep. Jim Piwowarczyk, R-Hubertus, will lead a task force on government efficiency, while Rep. Brent Jacobson, R-Mosinee, will chair one on state agency rulemaking.



Sept. 24 - Healthcare.gov in flux

Health insurers are seeking the largest rate increases in years for those who buy health insurance on their own, as temporary subsidies that made coverage more affordable are expected to sunset at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is pursuing a bevy of changes to Affordable Care Act regulations that could impact how consumers sign up for coverage.

The policy shifts come after Wisconsin set a record with more than 300,000 people signing up for Healthcare.gov plans last enrollment period.

Experts will discuss what the changes mean for Wisconsinites at a Sept. 24 virtual panel.

Panelists:

- **Caroline Gomez-Tom**, Enrollment Network and Accessibility Manager, Covering Wisconsin

