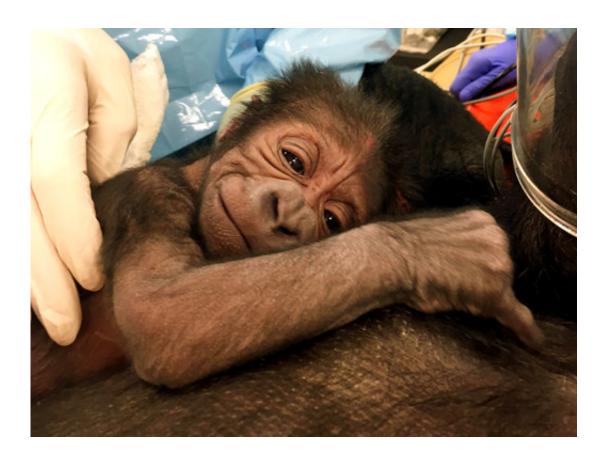# Gorilla gives birth with help from doctors who treat people

June 6 2017

This photo provided by the Philadelphia Zoo shows a newly born western lowland gorilla resting on its mother Kira in Philadelphia. Kira had a difficult labor that required medical techniques typically used for delivering human babies. Due to concerns about her and the baby's health, the zoo brought in a team from the veterinary and human medical field. After 1 ½ hours the team delivered the baby, Friday, June 2, 2017, using forceps and episiotomy. (Philadelphia Zoo via AP)

A gorilla at the Philadelphia Zoo has given birth to a healthy baby after a difficult labor that required medical techniques typically used for delivering humans.

A keeper noticed 17-year-old Kira had gone into labor on Thursday. Gorilla labor is typically very quick, but by Friday, it had not progressed and she seemed unwell.

Concerned about her and the baby's health, the zoo brought in a team of veterinarians and doctors who treat people. They included an ob-gyn, surgeons and anesthesiologists from hospitals affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania and Thomas Jefferson University, as well as University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

A similar team was in place for a gorilla birth at the zoo last year, but the emergency response wasn't needed.

After 1 ½ hours, the team delivered the male baby using forceps and an episiotomy, a procedure to enlarge the birth opening.

"It was an anxious and dramatic day at the zoo, but in the end a tremendously rewarding one," said Andy Baker, the zoo's chief operating officer.

There have been several successful cesarean section deliveries for gorillas over the past few years, but assisted vaginal delivery isn't common, according to the zoo.

This photo provided by the Philadelphia Zoo shows medical techniques assisting in the delivery of a newly born western lowland gorilla from its mother Kira in Philadelphia. Kira had a difficult labor that required medical techniques typically used for delivering human babies. Due to concerns about her and the baby's health, the zoo brought in a team from the veterinary and human medical field. After 1 ½ hours the team delivered the baby, Friday, June 2, 2017, using forceps and episiotomy. (Philadelphia Zoo via AP)

Kira was reunited with the baby by Saturday morning and has been continuously cradling and nursing him.

This is the first birth for Kira and third offspring for 32-year old Motuba, who is also father to baby Amani, a female born at the zoo last August.

Western lowland gorillas, which inhabit African forests, are listed as critically endangered species.

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