

## **ADOPTION**

*This LOP is developed to guide clinical practice at the Royal Hospital for Women. Individual patient circumstances may mean that practice diverges from this LOP.*

### **1. AIM**

- Support and care of woman considering adoption of her neonate, with respect to her individual circumstances and in accordance with NSW Health policy.

### **2. PATIENT**

- Any woman who is considering adoption of her neonate

### **3. STAFF**

- Medical, nursing and midwifery staff
- Social workers
- Administration officers

### **4. EQUIPMENT**

- Nil

### **5. CLINICAL PRACTICE**

- Make a referral to the Social Work Department for counselling and resources as soon as possible after woman has disclosed that she is considering adoption
- Be aware that different principles apply to adoption for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander neonates
- Provide supportive counselling for woman (and father of neonate if involved), and give information with regards to legal process and policies regarding adoption in NSW
- Explore the circumstances of the pregnancy and discuss alternatives to adoption as possible outcomes
- Outline options of care for the woman during pregnancy and options of care for her neonate postpartum
- Provide contact details and liaison with selected adoption agency
- Consult with midwives and midwifery managers with regards to woman's preferences of care for herself and neonate
- Facilitate completion of relevant documentation by medical officers
- Facilitate discharge of neonate to temporary foster care and creation of memory book
- Observe standard postnatal pathways for care of the woman and ensure that Child and Family Health Nurses are advised **not to contact the Birth Mother** for postnatal universal home visit

### **6. DOCUMENTATION**

- Integrated Clinical Notes
- Adoption Act Forms 13 and 15
- ObstetriX

### **7. EDUCATIONAL NOTES**

- Mother of neonate (and father if involved) retain full parental responsibility and make all decisions relating to treatment of her/their neonate, until she/they have signed formal consent to adoption, or a temporary foster care agreement
- Mother of neonate (and father if involved) have the right and should be encouraged to name her/ their neonate and register the birth. If no name is given the neonate will be registered as "unnamed male" or "unnamed female" which may be distressing for the child should they access their original birth certificate in the future. The name given to the neonate remains the child's name unless changed by the legal process.

## CLINICAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

Approved by Quality & Patient Care Committee  
5/5/16

### ADOPTION cont'd

- Legal adoption in NSW can only be arranged through an accredited agency. The process involves lengthy counselling and exploration of all alternative options, prior to formal court proceedings.
- The Adoption Act 2000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles are intended to ensure that children are placed with adoptive parents from within either of their parents' communities or with a family from another appropriate community.

#### 8. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/CLINICAL PRACTICE LOPS

- NSW Health PD2005\_545: Adoption of a Child: Guideline for Hospitals and Maternity Staff

#### 9. RISK RATING

- Low

#### 10. NATIONAL STANDARD

- CC - Comprehensive Care

#### 11. REFERENCES

- 1 Smith K et al 2008 The hospital-based adoption practice Amer J Maternal/Child Nursing 33:6 382-88
- 2 Siegel D 2003 Open adoption of infants: adoptive parents' feelings seven years later Social Work 48:3 409-19
- 3 Family and Community Services, Mandatory Written Information on Adoption, January 2016
- 4 Family and Community Services, Additional Information for Parents of an Aboriginal Child, January 2016

#### REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

Reviewed and endorsed Maternity Services LOPs 26/4/16

Approved Quality & Patient Safety Committee 21/10/10

Approved Quality Council 18/12/01 – titled *Care of Baby for Adoption on Postnatal Ward*

Endorsed Maternity Services Clinical Committee 11/12/01

For further review when NSW Health reviews the Adoption of a Child Policy Directive, due Oct 2016

**FOR REVIEW : MAY 2021**