

POLICY TITLE:	ADOPTION		
Reference #			
Issued/Sponsored by:		Approved by:	
Date Instated:		Revision Date:	

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

“HOSPITAL NAME” shall adopt an "adoption-neutral" position regarding adoptions facilitated within the institution. “HOSPITAL NAME” staff shall neither discourage nor encourage the mother to pursue adoption yet educate patients on their options to allow for informed decision making. Adoption shall be presented as an option to patients expressing a desire to pursue adoption as well as for patients expressing significant concern over parenting. The hospital will ensure the protection of the rights of both the biological mother and infant for whom adoption is being considered, the confidentiality of all information related to the biological mother and infant, and the proper discharge procedures for the infant. “HOSPITAL NAME” will not directly facilitate adoptions but will ensure all appropriate procedures are followed.

I) DEFINITIONS:

- A) **Adoption:** A judicial process establishing a legal parent-child relationship where one did not previously exist. This process may involve voluntary relinquishment of custody and parental rights by the natural parent(s) to an individual or agency through the Family Court system.
- B) **Natural Parents:** Biological parents who retain their rights regarding the child until such rights are legally terminated through judicial action.
- C) **Private Adoption:** A process where natural parents voluntarily place a child with a chosen family through an attorney, licensed agency, or adoption professional.
- D) **Private Attorney Adoption:** Adoption arrangements facilitated by an attorney, established prior to delivery and hospital admission.
- E) **Private Agency Adoption:** Arrangements made by the biological parent(s) with a licensed adoption agency for placement in an adoptive home.
- F) **Custody:** A legal relationship granting a responsible adult physical care and control of a minor, including medical decision-making authority.
- G) **Consents/Relinquishments/Surrenders:** Legal documents signed by biological parents to transfer custody to a designated guardian or agency.
- H) **Release:** A court order or consent document specifying the individual or agency authorized to take legal and/or physical custody of the child.
- I) **Prospective Adoptive Parent(s):** Individuals seeking to adopt a child, often requiring an approved home study or compliance with state adoption standards.
- J) **State Adoption:** Adoption facilitated and managed by the State's child welfare system.

(II) GENERAL STATEMENTS:

- A) Upon notification of a biological parent considering adoption, hospital social services shall be contacted.
- B) Social services will verify the mother's intent and determine if prior arrangements for adoption placement have been made.
- C) If the birth parent has made prior arrangements for adoption placement, the social worker will contact, and coordinate services with, the appropriate agent.
- D) If there are not prior arrangements for adoption placement, the social worker will present a list of vetted adoption professionals for the mother to choose. The social worker will contact the mother’s choice of agency who will send a representative to further educate on the adoption option.

- E) “HOSPITAL NAME” staff shall not use their positions to influence patient decisions for or against adoption.
- F) “HOSPITAL NAME” employee shall not arrange private adoptions with patients for themselves or others.
- G) The hospital will not link biological parents with unlicensed adoption agencies or individuals.

III) PROTECTING AND RELEASING INFORMATION:

- A) The privacy of the biological parent and infant shall be protected in all ways.
- B) Information about a potential adoption, including the identity of the infant or biological parent, will not be disclosed to unauthorized individuals.
- C) Infant cribs will not display visible identifiers. Identification bands shall state "Confidential" in place of the mother's last name.
- D) The social worker will document in the medical records of the birth parent and infant the least amount of information that will protect all parties.

IV) DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

- A) Biological parent(s) must complete all necessary hospital forms prior to relinquishing custody. This may include:
 - 1) Consent for Medical Treatment.
 - 2) Authorization for Administration of Anesthesia and Procedures.
 - 3) Authorization to Release Protected Health Information.
 - 4) Permission to Visit Baby Being Adopted.
 - 5) Permission for Release of Minor Patient.
- B) Additional documentation may be needed by the adoption agency or attorney.
- C) Hospital staff will not provide witnesses, but may provide a notary public, if available.

V) CARE AND ACCESS TO INFANT:

- A) Biological parents maintain full rights to the infant, including consenting to treatment and determining who has access to the infant, until custody is legally relinquished.
- B) After signing relinquishment papers, biological parents may access the infant with the legal guardian's consent.
- C) Visitors to the infant are determined by the biological parent(s) until custody is transferred, after which the legal guardian assumes authority.
- D) Adoptive parents may be permitted to visit and perform parenting tasks with appropriate permissions. A room for the adoptive parents will be provided if available.

VI) DISCHARGE:

- A) The infant will only be released to the biological parent unless legal documents authorize release to a licensed agency representative, court-appointed guardian, or attorney.
- B) The discharging nurse will verify the photo ID of the authorized agent and obtain their signature on the Permission for Release of Minor Patient form.
- C) Infant identification bands and medical records will be verified before discharge.
- D) Detailed discharge instructions on how to care for the infant will be provided to the adoptive parents and adoption agency representative, and discharge instructions on post-partum care for the biological parent will be provided directly to her.

VII) RELEASE TO THIRD PARTIES:

- A) Hospital records containing the biological parent’s name or medical record number will only be provided with explicit, written consent from the parent and will be provided to the adoption agency representative, not directly to the adoptive parents.
- B) All external inquiries regarding potential adoptions must be directed to Hospital Administration.

Vetting Adoption Professionals

Use the following questions to help you determine qualified, professional, and caring adoption specialists who are best suited to work with your patients:

- Do they provide confidential 24/7 support to your patients to help them make the best plan for themselves and their child?
- Can the agency respond immediately and provide regular face-to-face contact?
- Do they have experience working with women who are already parenting and/or facing difficult life circumstances including substance use, mental health needs, homelessness, or special needs of the child?
- Does the agency connect an expectant mother with community resources should she decide to parent?
- Is the organization reliant on fees paid for a placement or is their budget not dependent on a mom choosing adoption?
- Do they have prospective families approved for an array of special needs of the child?
- Do they provide your patient with her own advocate that will be separate from the adoptive family's advocate?
- Do they provide support and counseling for expectant mothers after delivery?
- For how long?
- Do they provide a separate advocate for the expectant father if he is involved and would like his own advocate?
- Do they believe adoption is a great option for many women, but do know it is not for every woman?

Adoption Professionals List

LIFELINE PREGNANCY COUNSELING

Text or Call - 1.800.875.5595 | planmyadoption.com



Lifeline was designed with you in mind! They provide free, confidential, and no-pressure services to help YOU decide if adoption is right for you. You should be able to explore your options to balance what’s best for you and what’s best for your child.

- Lifeline has staff available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and only a call or text away.
- You deserve an advocate who only represents your interests, not those of the adoptive family.
- You deserve the freedom to consider all your options.
- You deserve to make decisions at your own pace.
- You deserve an adoptive family who is committed and prepared to honor you. You can also choose if you want an open, semi-open, or closed adoption.
- You deserve an agency that will put you first.
- Lifeline can help you get connected to resources.
- They will provide pre and post-placement support and will walk with you every step of the way.
- They exist to provide you with hope and peace through all-inclusive adoption care.

AGENCY NAME HERE

Agency #- 1800-000-0000 | **Insert website here**

**Information about the agency **

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