**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all nurses, social workers (SW) and patient services clerks (PSC) employed by the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) as well as physicians and midwives with privileges caring for patients in the Maternal, Newborn Child & Youth (MNCY) Program.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

This policy shall provide a standardized approach to adoption procedures in Ontario and shall ensure adherence to the requirements of the Ontario Child and Family Services Act and with the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services in all adoptions.

 It is expected that all staff shall adhere to the principles as outlined in this policy.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Private Adoption:** The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services approves two kinds of licenses for private adoption:

1. **Individual Licensee:** Individual licensed by the province to carry out the legal work of an adoption. The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services shall approve a placement prior to children being placed.
2. **Private Agency:** Agency licensed by the province to carry out the legal work of an adoption. The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services shall approve a placement prior to children being placed.

**Child Protection Agency Adoption:** Child Protection Agencies are established by legislation to perform adoption services. Local Child Protection Agencies complete home studies on applicant families and can approve and place children in homes without having to obtain approval from the Director of the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

**Closed Adoption:** Birth parents wish to have no involvement with the adoptive family and all information regarding the birth family shall remain confidential and not accessible to the adoptive family.

**Open Adoption:** Birth parents wish to have some form of contact with the adoptive parents.

**Planned Adoption:** Birth parents have adoption plan in place prior to admission/birth.

**Unplanned Adoption**: Birth parents have no adoption plan in place prior to birth/admission. If the birth parent(s) wish to place child with a family member or friend the local Child Protection Agency shall be contacted by hospital staff. Refer to Policy and Procedure: *Reporting Child Abuse.*

**PROCEDURE:**

1. When prenatal patients are identified by their care provider as wanting an adoption, this information, including the referral source should be communicated to the RVH MNCY Program SW.
2. The RVH MNCY Program SW shall schedule a consultation with the birth parent(s), when possible.
3. A plan of care shall be created detailing the birth parent(s) requests and wishes. Refer to *Appendix I: Planned Adoption Plan of Care.*
4. If a SW is unavailable the Birthing Unit (BU) nurse shall be notified and shall be responsible for creating a plan of care (Refer to *Appendix I: Planned Adoption Plan of Care).*
5. In the event that birth parent(s) are admitted to the hospital without a plan of care or plan for adoption (*Refer to Appendix II: Unplanned Adoption*) the SW shall provide support and counselling regarding options for adoption.
6. The SW shall provide support to the birth parent(s) in contacting a private adoption agency/licensee or Child Protection Agency the of their choice.
7. Following education by the SW, in the absence of the SW, the BU nurse shall be notified and shall be responsible for providing this information (*Refer to* *Appendix III: Adoption Checklist for Nursing Staff in the Absence of the Social Worker*).
8. The plan of care, when possible, shall include birth parent’s birthing plan including:
9. labour and delivery choices;
10. feeding plan for the baby;
11. plans for placement of baby with respect to the adopted parent(s) if applicable;
12. location of care of baby (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, or with birth parent on Obstetrics).
13. In all private adoptions, the SW shall verify that the licensee/agency chosen by the birth parent(s) is currently authorized by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services to handle adoptions in Ontario.
14. The SW shall ensure a copy of license and photograph of licensee/agency license is placed on infant’s chart.
15. The SW shall ensure:
16. the birth parent(s) are aware of their legal rights regarding adoption;
17. the initial legal forms for an adoption can only be signed the 8th day or later following birth;
18. the birth parent(s) understand they have 21 days following the initial consent to revoke consent;
19. the birth parent(s) are well informed that after this 21 day period the adoption is irrevocable.

12. In private adoption, the birth parent(s) are by law provided access to adoption

 counselling and shall choose the adopting parent(s) who meet the birth parent(s)

 criteria with the assistance of the licensee.

13. Birth parent who is age 16 years of age older, and has the competency to do so,

 is in charge of all their choices and decisions for adoption.

14. Birth parent who is under the age of 16 years shall have a guardian appointed

 to help them with adoption decisions.

15. The birth parent(s) shall continue to have all decision making authority with respect

 to the infant unless they sign a consent requesting the licensee, adopted parents,

 or Child Protection Agency acts on her behalf Refer to RVH Form # 2315

 *Maternal, Newborn Child and Youth Social Work Authorization for Releasing or*

 *Obtaining Information.*

Documentation

 1. The birth parent shall sign RVH Form # 2315 *Maternal, Newborn Child and*

 *Youth Social Work Authorization for Releasing or Obtaining Information* prior

 as soon as they request an adoption.

 2. The birth parents(s) and private adoption agency/licensee or Child Protection

Agency shall sign RVH Form # 0217 *Adoption/Surrogate Birth - Authorization and Release* prior to discharge.

 3. This document transfers temporary guardianship of the infant from the birth parent

 to the private adoption agency/licensee or Child Protection Agency.

 4. The Patient Services Clerk/BU nurse shall complete the Ontario Health Coverage

 Infant Registration Form and shall leave the tear off strip attached to the form and

 submit as usual.

 5. The private adoption agency/licensee or Child Protection Agency shall not be given

 the health card number of the form/tear off strip.

 6. The private adoption agency/licensee or Child Protection Agency shall submit for a

 new health card number through Service Ontario.

**CROSS REFERENCES:**

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (2018). Corporate Clinical Policy and Procedure: *Documentation Guidelines.*

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (2018). Corporate Clinical Policy and Procedure: *Patient Identification.*

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (2017). Corporate Clinical Policy and Procedure: *Privacy of Personal Information (PI) and Personal Health Information (PHI).*

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre. (2018). Corporate Administrative Policy and Procedure: *Reporting Child Abuse.*

**REFERENCES:**

BC Women’s Hospital and Health Centre (2012). Policy and Procedure: *Adoption Policy: Fetal Maternal Newborn and Family Health*

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College of Nurses of Ontario (2017). Practice Standard: *Documentation, Revised 2008.*

College of Nurses of Ontario (2017). Practice Standard: *Confidentiality and Privacy- Personal Health Information.*

College of Nurses of Ontario (2009). Practice Standard: *Ethics.*

Child and Family Service Act. (2017). R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11.

Grey Bruce Health Services (2017). Policy and Procedure: *Adoption: Women and Child Care.*

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. (2018). *Code of Ethics*

*& Standards of Practice.* Retrieved from: <https://www.ocswssw.org/professional-practice/code-of-ethics/>

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. (2018). *Practice*

*Guidelines for Consent and Confidentiality with Children and Youth.* Retrieved from: <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/OCSWSSW-Children-Youth-Guide-2014-E-v3.pdf>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2017). Adoption. Retrieved from [http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/adoption/index.aspx#](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/adoption/index.aspx)!

Sault Area Hospital (2018). Policy and Procedure: *Adoption: Women and Children’s Health Program.*

Queensway Carleton Hospital (2010). Policy and Procedure: *Newborn Adoption Procedures and Guidelines*

1. Birth Plan – including attending supports and if the adoptive parent (s) are allowed to

 attend the delivery, pain management in labour and. skin to skin/holding baby.

2. Birth parent(s) involvement with infant(s) after birth and while in hospital.

3. Breastfeeding plans/feeding plans.

4. If birth parent does not wish to breastfeed they shall be provided with support

 regarding breast care.

5. Level of participation by adopted parent(s) in infant care.

6. Bed allocation i.e. separate rooms or sharing one room.

7. Retrieve signed consents/documentation.

1. Provide birth parent wit the two different options of adoptions;

1. Private adoption
2. Child Protection Services

2. Provide contact information for birth pareint’s choice;

1. Local Child Protection Agency: Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions at 1-800-416-4236 and ask to speak to on-call adoption Social Worker
2. Provide list of Ministry approved adoption agencies/licensee. List can be found on Ministry website:

[*http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/adoption/decided-to-adopt/privateagencies.aspx*](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/adoption/decided-to-adopt/privateagencies.aspx)

3. Support birth parent in contacting the option of their choice.

4. Create a plan of care including:

1. Birth plan including attending support people
2. Pain management
3. Birth parent(s) involvement with infant(s) upon birth such as skin-to-skin
4. Bed allocation: sharing one room or separate rooms
5. Breastfeeding plans/feeding plans
6. If birth parent does not wish to breastfeed they shall be provided with support regarding breast care.

5. Retrieve signed consents/documentation.

Once hospital becomes aware of birth parents expressed desire to place her infant for adoption:

1. Provide contact information on the two types of adoption – Private verses Public (information can be found in policy)
2. Provide support as birth parent contacts her adoption choice (private verses public)
3. Birth Parent signs Consent to Disclose Personal Health Information
4. Birth Parent Signs Adoption/Surrogacy: Release and Acceptance Form
5. If Birth Parent wishes to place child with a family member or friend the local Child Protection Agency shall be notified.
6. Place Photocopies of Child Protection Agency Worker/Adoption Worker is placed on birth parent’s and infant’s chart
7. Support/Liaison between Adoption Agency/Child Protection Agency and the birth parent(s)