

PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSION IN A CATHOLIC HOSPITAL'S SURROGACY POLICY

Catholic Health Australia has developed a set of principles that can help Catholic hospitals that are asked to respond to requests for surrogate births. CHA recommends that a Catholic hospital's policy in relation to surrogacy should address the following matters:

- Catholic hospitals give recognition to the dignity of pregnant women and unborn children;
 - There are different legal requirements of surrogacy by state and territory governments, and there is an obligation for people considering a surrogacy to inform themselves of these obligations;
 - Catholic hospitals do not provide direct assistance in surrogacy arrangements;
 - Decisions as to if services can be provided where a surrogacy arrangement is in place will be made on a case-by-case basis. The person or persons within the hospital responsible for considering individual requests should be identified. The role of ethicists in advising hospitals on how they might implement Church teaching in the individual circumstances of different surrogacy arrangements should also be made clear;
 - Prioritisation of care is given to birth mothers and their children;
 - Decisions in relation to pregnancy management, attendance at the birth and care of the child are those of the birth mother, and a Catholic hospital may not be able to honour an arrangement that a birth mother has made as part of a surrogacy agreement;
 - The baby will be discharged from the hospital into the care of the birth mother, and at discharge the mother is legally responsible for the child;
 - Staff have the opportunity to make a decision not to participate in a surrogacy arrangement if they hold a conscientious objection;
 - Access to pastoral and counselling support is available to birth mothers;
 - Consultation with the local bishop shall occur prior to adoption of an organisational policy.
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