SURROGACY INFORMATION

Quinte Health Care (QHC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in progressive, medically responsible forms of alternative family planning. Both traditional and gestational surrogacy arrangements are recognized as such, and we aim to provide you, whether you are the birth or intended parents, with a positive delivery and postpartum experience.

At QHC, we recognize the birth mother and newborn infant as patients of the hospital and must promote their health and well-being above all other considerations. In Ontario, common law recognizes the woman who gives birth as the baby’s mother. As such, all decision-making authority rests with her until such time that a court declares otherwise. That being said, we make every effort to support the intended parents, recognizing that their early interactions with the child contribute to a positive formative experience.

Pre-admission:

We encourage surrogate mothers & intended parents to meet with us prior to admission. This is called a pre-admission conference and gives all parties an opportunity to tour our facility and discuss expectations. We also encourage the parties to complete our Surrogacy Pre-Admission Questionnaire, which is similar to a birth plan but speaks more directly to circumstances unique to surrogacy (can be printed beforehand from our website at www.qhc.on.ca/having-a-baby-at-qhc). Families are also welcome to provide their legal documentation, although it is not necessary, as we do not place this information on the health record. It is important to note that the hospital is not a party to the legal contract between the birth mother and intended parents, but we do strive to honour any special requests that are consistent with the birth mother’s wishes, our policies and available resources.

In the delivery room:

In the delivery room, the birth mother is encouraged to have a support person present. The intended parents are permitted to be present if agreeable to the birth mother. In the occurrence of an adverse event, the medical staff alone determines who may be present during the delivery.

Registration:

The hospital initially registers and bands the baby with the birth mother’s information; however, we can quickly complete a ‘name change’ and apply a second band with the information from the intended parents.

Postpartum care & accommodations:

In the postpartum period, the birth mother may choose to have the infant in her room (“rooming-in”), or designate the intended parents to fulfill her care-giving role. In the case of the latter, we offer the option of admitting the newborn to our adjoining pediatric ward (if no such bed is available, we may consider admission to our SCN). In this scenario, the birth mother retains decision-making authority, but typically makes any decisions in tandem with the intended parents. We offer this option because we recognize the importance of giving the intended parents the opportunity to participate in direct caregiving and newborn health teaching, prior to discharge.

Courtesy of Kathleen O’Connor, Maternal Child Program, Belleville General Hospital. The information provided herein is based on our hospital’s Surrogate Birth policy, is for information purposes only and is not intended to replace legal counsel. Last update: August 2013.
Signing authority:

There are a few documents that need to be signed by the birth mother (in applicable circumstances):

► **OHIP registration** - ONLY applicable if the intended parents reside in Ontario. This prevents Ontario residents from having to potentially pay for their newborn’s medical care.

► **Hearing Screening** - the birth mother must sign this so the baby’s hearing test can be done prior to discharge; however, the contact information should be that of the intended parents if they reside in Ontario. If not completed, potential early hearing loss could go undetected.

► **Public Health** - the birth mother signs this to permit the baby’s information to be transmitted to the Public Health Unit. This program is universal for every baby born in the province. If the intended parents live in Ontario, the information is then forwarded to the corresponding health unit.

► **Discharge Form** - Both the birth mother and intended parents must sign the “Authorization To Release Child From Hospital” and “Acknowledgement of Receipt of Child from Quinte Health Care” form. The top half is signed by the birth mother, which gives consent for the hospital to discharge the baby to the intended parents. The bottom half is signed by the intended parents to acknowledge that they received the child from us. Otherwise, the newborn has to be discharged to the birth mother.

► **Note**: There is no signing of the birth registration/certificate while in hospital. For information on how these documents are completed, please consult your attorney.

**Additional costs:**

Birth mothers with a valid OHIP number do not pay for their healthcare (outside of upgrades to private or semi-private accommodations). If the intended parents are from a province/territory outside of Ontario, they may be required to pay for medical costs associated with the infant’s care and should discuss this with both their provincial carrier, and the hospital’s finance department. If the intended parents are from out of country, they will be responsible for healthcare costs associated with newborn care, and should make payment arrangements with the finance department prior to discharge.

Formula during baby’s hospital stay is provided free of charge, but the intended parents are permitted to bring their own brand if desired.

**Discharge:**

As stated above, if the birth mother wishes to leave hospital prior to the newborn, she can sign a form designating discharge to the intended parents; however, the birth mother would need to remain accessible should consent for treatment be required.

**Please note:**

While we strive to honor your planning, the hospital must act in accordance with applicable laws and legislation; therefore, if the planning is not harmonious, lacks clarity or initiates conflict between the parties, the hospital has the authority to insist that the birth mother resume direct caregiving responsibilities. Please contact our program’s Team Leader, Social Worker or Manager if you have additional questions (613-969-7400 x. 2775).