

OPEN DISCLOSURE POLICY

This Policy sets out the minimum requirements for a consistent open disclosure process within City Fertility and City Health to ensure that patients and their support person(s), where relevant, are:

- Communicated openly regarding an adverse event that has caused harm to the patient or patient's embryos/gametes.
- Provided with an opportunity to recount their experiences, concerns and feelings and are listened to.
- Treated respectfully and provided with ongoing care and support for as long as is required.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The mandatory requirements for City Fertility and City Health in implementing the open disclosure policy following an adverse event that has impacted a patient or patient gamete/ embryo safety incident are based on the principles outlined in the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

These principles address the complex interests of patients, clinicians/ accredited medical officers, managers, health services and other key stakeholder groups such as healthcare consumers, medical indemnity insurers and professional organisations. The mandatory requirements are as follows:

1. Acknowledge an adverse incident that has caused harm to a patient or patient's gametes/ embryos as soon as possible, generally within 24 hours of the incident. This includes recognising the significance of the incident to the patient.
2. Truthful, clear and timely communication on an ongoing basis as required.
3. Providing an apology to the patient and/ or their support person(s) as early as possible, including the words "I am sorry" or "we are sorry".
4. Providing care and support to patients and/or their support person(s) which is responsive to their needs and expectations for as long as is required.
5. Providing support to those providing health care which is responsive to their needs and expectations.
6. An integrated approach to improving patient safety, in which open disclosure is linked with clinical and corporate governance, incident reporting, risk management, complaints management and quality improvement policies and processes. The company's mature quality management system has documented and reported these processes for many years. This integrated approach will include evaluating the process by patients and their support person(s) and staff, accountability for learning from patient or patient embryo/gametes safety incidents and evidence of systems improvement.
7. Multidisciplinary involvement in the open disclosure process requiring input from each department involved, plus their direct treating clinician and medical director, where relevant.
8. Compliance with legal requirements for Privacy and Confidentiality for the patient and/or their support person(s), and staff delivering health care.

IMPLEMENTATION

Senior Management Team is responsible for:

- Developing an open disclosure education framework for all clinical staff and other staff as necessary.
- Collaborating with health services to advise clinicians/ accredited medical officers and clinic managers on open disclosure issues and scenarios.
- Providing evaluation tools for open disclosure.
- Providing information to support open disclosure for clinicians.
- Providing information about open disclosure for patients and their support person(s).

ART Clinicians (City Fertility)/ Accredited Medical Officers (City Health) and Clinical Nursing Teams are responsible for:

- Actively committing to open disclosure for all patient safety incidents, to create and support an environment where the focus is on patient-based care.
- Enabling timely open disclosure through actively promoting a just and fair culture that ensures all staff in the health service are supported and encouraged to identify and report when a patient or patient embryo/ gamete safety incident has occurred.
- Building a positive culture by learning from all patient safety incidents.

The National Compliance Manager is responsible for:

- Leading and overseeing the implementation of the City Fertility/ City Health Open Disclosure Policy and supporting checklist.
- Ensuring that systems and processes are in place for all staff in the health service to identify and report when a patient safety incident has occurred, so that open disclosure can be initiated.

The Director of Nursing (City Health) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all day hospital/ procedure centre staff (and other staff as deemed necessary for their role) access and complete role-relevant open disclosure education and training.
- Building a positive open disclosure culture by sharing incidents with staff & clinicians and implementing continuous improvement.
- Allocating responsibilities and resources to maintain effective open disclosure processes.
- Providing reports of adverse events and open disclosure for health services and various committees as required.

Reference to:

Australian Open Disclosure Framework. Better Communication, a Better Way to Care. Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care.

NSW Government Ministry of Health Open Disclosure Policy (Sept 14)

VIC Department of Health Open Disclosure Framework (May 24)