



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA Amends In Vitro Fertilisation Service to Include Female Same-Sex Couples

The Gibraltar Health Authority has approved an amendment to its In Vitro Fertilisation Policy to include female same-sex couples in accordance with the same conditions that apply to heterosexual couples. The decision was taken by the GHA board at its last meeting.

In all cases the IVF treatment has to be recommended by a consultant gynaecologist with expertise in managing cases of infertility, after referral from a GP. The procedure also has to be endorsed by a second clinician specialised in the field.

The Policy is applicable to all Group Practice Medical Scheme entitled persons seeking treatment, subject to meeting a number of criteria. The partner to receive IVF must be between the age of 23 and 42, while the other partner must not be older than 55. The couple should also have a clinical diagnosis of infertility and be non-smokers prior to treatment, with the IVF recipient having never smoked, or having ceased smoking, at least six months prior to the application.

As in the case of heterosexual couples, there are several excluding circumstances for the treatment, such as: life-threatening illness, history of domestic violence, child abuse, drug or alcohol misuse, record of criminal behaviour and any interfering psychological/social factors.

Adoption of a child by either person does not affect eligibility.

The Policy has also been further developed so that heterosexual or female same-sex couples who have been refused access to IVF treatment after assessment by the consultant gynaecologist may now apply for a review of the decision by a Clinical Review Panel by putting their grievance in writing to the Medical Director.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, welcomed the GHA initiative: "I am very pleased to note that the GHA board amended the IVF policy so that this can now be available not just to heterosexual couples but also to female same-sex couples. This scientific technique will help many couples who in normal circumstances would have been unable to have any children to fulfil their desire for parenthood. As a forward-thinking and progressive administration we are confident that this is a positive addition to the services provided by the GHA to the entire community. I wish to thank my predecessor, the Hon. John Cortes, for having addressed this important equality question during his tenure as Health Minister. It is right and proper that in the interests of equality IVF treatment at the GHA will now be open to female same-sex couples as well."

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice

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