

Principle/Introduction:

The Perinatal Social Worker must be aware of the complex social and hospital policy issues inherent in the process of teenage pregnancy. Each healthcare provider that offers pediatric and obstetric services shall have a Perinatal Social Worker as an integral member of the health care delivery system. Social work services shall be available to the teenage mother and her newborn, as well as, her family. The services are aimed at alleviating the stress of the pregnancy and hospitalization, maximizing the potential for optimal growth and development through an effective network of services.

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Standards for Adolescent Pregnancy

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Standard 1

Services to the teenage mother shall include a social work assessment with resources for ongoing counseling, education programs and referrals to appropriate community agencies that can provide emotional and physical support to the teenage parent.

Standard 2

Hospitals shall maintain and implement a plan regarding the provision of services to a teenage mother and her infant. This plan shall be developed by a Masters level social worker and shall define the responsibilities and function of the social worker.

Standard 3

Social Work services shall be offered to teenage mothers to prepare them for hospitalization/delivery, understanding newborn care and medical issues and the continuing need for educational services. Include in these services shall be teaching parenting skills, determining the educational needs of the mother, and identifying essential support services.

Standard 4

The Perinatal Social Worker shall function as an integral part of the health care team in setting hospital policies and making decision related to a teenage mother's pregnancy and delivery.

Standard 5

An adequate budget allocation shall ensure a reasonable social worker/patient ratio as well as an environment conducive to therapeutic intervention, and a private place in which individuals and families the opportunity to address their issues and/or express concerns.

Standard 6

The Perinatal Social Worker shall document involvement with the family in the medical record. Documentation shall include the social workers observations, assessments and plans for treatment. Documentation shall be limited to information essential to the overall health plans and shall protect patient confidentiality.

Standard 7

There will be a mechanism for accountability written into the plan for provision for services. This mechanism shall include peer review, evaluation of job performance, and the effectiveness of the program.

Standard 8

Needs assessment and program development for teenage pregnancy shall include input from the client population. Families currently experiencing teenage pregnancy as well as former patients shall be encouraged to actively participate with the staff.

Standard 9

The Perinatal Social Worker shall assist the family to procure benefits and services to which they are entitled. The social worker should be knowledgeable about how to access the resources and be able to advocate for the family as needed.

Standard 10

Direct services to the teenage mother and her family shall include information sharing aimed at the teenage mother's adaptation to the stress of being pregnant and the responsibility of a newborn. The Perinatal Social Worker shall facilitate communication with the family and the health care providers.

Standard 11

The Perinatal Social Worker shall be aware of the issues related to parental-infant bonding that are specific to teens and committed to a unit policy that ensures maximum parental involvement.

Standard 12

The Perinatal Social Worker shall, in recognition of the far reaching disequilibrium created by the teenage pregnancy, work with families to help them reestablish and maintain a sense of equilibrium. Appropriate services from outside agencies shall be sought out and mobilized in conjunction with those provided directly by the Perinatal Social Worker.

Standard 13

Perinatal Social Work services shall include support and teaching to the medical, nursing and auxiliary staff regarding the dynamics and needs of the family and staff. Efforts shall be directed at helping staff develop a complete view of the family who is experiencing the teenage pregnancy and newborn and their unique needs.

Standard 14

The Perinatal Social Worker shall be committed to the pursuit of continuing education and contribution to the knowledge base of Perinatal Social Work. The social worker shall actively participate with peers in an effort to expand that knowledge base and to ensure quality services to families. The perinatal setting shall support staff development and attend to the stress of the Perinatal Social Worker by providing opportunities for and facilitating attendance at workshops, institutes, seminars, and post-graduate courses.