



Thinking Ahead: Presenting Choices in Fertility Preservation

*Michelle Fritsch, LMSW-ACP
Arlene Brown, LCSW, OSW-C, CHES
Lorena Llamas, LMSW
Davina Fankhauser, MA*




Cancer and AYA's

- AYA is period of complex psychosocial stage of life
- Premature confrontation with mortality
- Affects fundamental issues
 - Establishing identity and self image
 - Increasing involvement with peers
 - Beginning to make decisions about future goals



Reproductive Health

- Key component of cancer care and survivorship
- Encompasses issues ranging from contraception and fertility preservation to menopause



Recognized Issue

- Recognizes fertility preservation as a key issue for survivorship and provide guidelines
- American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)
- American Society for Reproductive Medicine
- American Academy of Pediatrics



Fertility Preservation

- Emerging field
- Until recently, infertility was considered to be unavoidable consequence of pediatric cancer treatment



Cancer Treatment & Fertility

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation



Fertility

- Parents and clinicians prioritize treatment, not fertility preservation
- Parents want information but do not want to “burden” adolescent patient
- AYA’s want access to information; this may serve to promote hope.



Structured Fertility Preservation Program

- Establishing a structured fertility preservation program has been shown to increase
 - both patient satisfaction and
 - fertility preservation utilization rates
- Oncofertility Consortium established 2007 to create an interdisciplinary global network committed to fertility preservation research



Open Discussions

- Proactive management of reproductive health issues
 - *Information sharing and communication
 - *reduces confusion, anxiety and fear
 - *informs decision making
 - *assists in skill acquisition



Barriers to Fertility Preservation

- Provider bias
- Time Constraints
- Concerns regarding cost
- Health providers lack of knowledge regarding fertility preservation options



Program Components

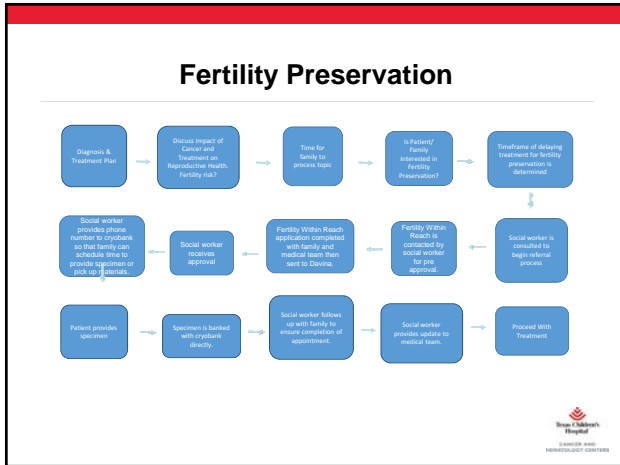
- Education about reproductive health
- Counseling about patient's individualized risk of infertility
- Options for fertility preservation
- Financial implications of interventions

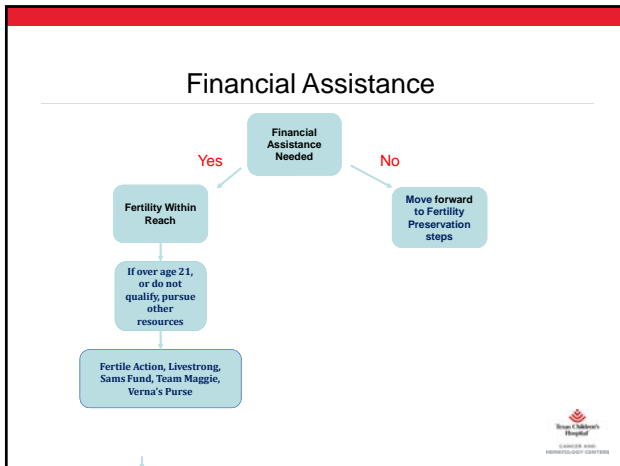


Fertility Preservation & Financial Constraints

- Most insurance companies will not pay for fertility preservation
 - If insurance company will pay – stipulation includes must attempt to conceive for over one year prior to payments made.







- ### Fertility Within Reach (FWR)
- Disclosures
 - Financial Assistance – Banking on the Future
 - What is covered & What is not covered
 - What can change subsequent years
 - Application
 - Qualifications/Exclusions
 - Approval
 - Next Steps
 - Social Worker
 - Families
 - Fertility Within Reach
 - Cryobank
- St. Louis Children's Hospital
CANCER AND REPRODUCTIVE CENTERS

Fertility Within Reach

Banking on the Future

- Financial Assistance
 - A resource listed by the NIH National Cancer Institute
 - Fertility Within Reach covers the cost for the first year of storage of reproductive cells, tissue, or embryos
 - Fertility Preservation options for Boys vs. Girls
 - We are invoiced by the cryobank directly. There are no out of pocket expenses for the family unless they choose to seek additional services.
 - FWR negotiated a discounted rate of \$200 for subsequent years of storage for sperm and eggs, and \$250 for tissue and embryos, until age 24. At that time, the patient is automatically eligible for the Fertile Hope discount.



Fertility Within Reach (FWR)

Banking on the Future

- What is not covered
 - More than one collection and preservation of sperm
 - Cost related to egg/sperm/tissue retrievals
 - Infectious Disease Testing
- What can change costs in subsequent years
 - Without Infectious Disease Testing results, patients could face an increased fee
 - For those choosing additional sperm collection, a maximum of \$100 per collection is owed to the cryobank at the time of the initial collection



Fertility Within Reach

Application

- Application
 - Online or via Social Worker
 - Email application to admin@fertilitywithinreach.org and call Davina
- Qualifications
 - Under 22 years old
 - Prior to cancer treatment
 - Team signature required
- Exclusions
 - Insurance coverage for service

Approval

- Fertility Within Reach responds within 24 hours
- Notification
 - Email confirmation and/or call
- Next steps are reviewed
- Follow-up



Fertility Within Reach

Next Steps

- Social Worker
 - Review storage process with family
 - Provides cryobank paperwork if they have it
- Families
 - Fill out cryobank paperwork
 - Collection and delivery of sperm or make appointment for reproductive egg/tissue procurement and preservation. Only storage is covered for female patients.
- Fertility Within Reach
 - Contact Cryobank with applicant information
 - Request partnership with cryobank if not within program
- Cryobank
 - Support families
 - Coordinate with social worker if necessary
 - Invoice Fertility Within Reach