

PERINATAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE FOR A DIAGNOSIS THAT INDICATES A BABY WILL DIE BEFORE OR AFTER BIRTH

If a pregnant woman is diagnosed with a fetal anomaly incompatible with life, there is an alternative to abortion. Oklahoma Law (63 O.S. § 1-746.3) requires the State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision to publish information regarding perinatal and palliative care services available should a woman choose to continue her pregnancy.

Perinatal Hospice and Palliative care is designed for parents who have received a diagnosis of a fetal anomaly that is incompatible with life and choose to continue the pregnancy, despite the possibility that the baby will die before or after birth. Typically, with perinatal hospice and palliative care, a supportive team will work with the family as they make plans to care for the birth and death of the infant and through the postpartum period. This supportive care may include maternal-fetal medical specialists, obstetricians, neonatologist, anesthesia specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists, or other mental health professionals, clergy, social workers, and specialty nurses who will provide clear and relevant information that is needed, such as:

Educational Support

- Provide family with specific information about the unborn child's diagnosis.
- Help family know what to expect throughout the grieving process.
- Offer private childbirth education classes and hospital tours.

Emotional Support

- Provide grief support beginning at time of diagnosis.
- Offer referrals for professional or pastoral care as requested.
- Attend delivery at the family's request to serve as an advocate and to provide additional emotional support.
- Provide follow-up support throughout the bereavement period.
- Refer family to a local bereavement support group.

Practical Guidance

- Assist with a personalized birth plan that speaks to parents' wishes for the labor and delivery experience and care of the infant at birth.
- Provide coordination of services between different caregivers.
- Assist the family with the collection and preservation of keepsakes.
- Help the family plan a memorial service.

Resources

The Silas Program, Helmerich Women's Health Center at Hillcrest – Tulsa

Includes perinatal, neonatal and postpartum support.

918-579-7227

SILAS@Hillcrest.com

<https://hillcrestmedicalcenter.com/content/silas-program>

Pediatric Palliative Care Team at OU Children's Hospital – Oklahoma City

Includes perinatal and neonatal support.

405-271-2387

<https://www.oumedicine.com/department-of-pediatrics/department-sections/palliative-care/>

Perinatalhospice.org

National clearinghouse for information and referrals to perinatal hospice services

<https://www.perinatalhospice.org/>