

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM STATEMENT

For the Catholic New World newspaper

**Re: Gottlieb Hospital's protocol for handling human remains after miscarriage
June 26, 2009**

Gottlieb Memorial Hospital always has had a family-centered care tradition, but enhanced it with the Catholic tradition when Gottlieb Memorial Hospital became part of the Loyola University Health System in 2008. As such, Gottlieb revised its health service offerings to be in line with the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

Thanks to the strong working relationship that Loyola and Gottlieb have established in the years prior to the affiliation, many on the Gottlieb staff had some familiarity of Loyola's culture. However, when the affiliation became official, more formal training of staff began to ensure awareness of Loyola's protocols for care.

Special training has been provided to the appropriate Gottlieb staff, where awareness of the Catholic directives and traditions are critical. In the case of miscarriage, Gottlieb follows the same protocol as Loyola: We honor a parent's choice to bury the remains of a miscarried fetus, even before 20 weeks' gestation, when most other hospitals in Illinois would classify the remains as a "surgical specimen."

As with all new affiliations, it sometimes takes longer for staff members to learn the nuances of communicating within a new culture. Although federal privacy laws will not allow us to comment on a specific patient case without express written permission, we know that the staff member did follow both the state law and Loyola guidelines, but her verbal response was not at the level of sensitivity equal to Loyola's firm commitment to honor the dignity of babies who die before birth. Loyola and Gottlieb staff have held an educational session, so that staff in both obstetrics/gynecology and in surgery know how to have a conversation about miscarriage remains that is sensitive to the beliefs and values of Catholics.

As part of Loyola University Health System, Gottlieb Memorial Hospital is able to tap into the spiritual and support resources that Loyola has brought to the Melrose Park hospital. Parents who are grieving pregnancy losses may receive counseling from one of Gottlieb's chaplains and/or choose to participate in Loyola's grief support group called Honoring Unspoken Grief (HUG). This group was designed specifically for parents who have lost a child between conception and one-year-old.

Honoring the dignity of the person is woven into Loyola's dedication to whole-person care and defines the services we offer. As part of the Loyola family, Gottlieb Memorial Hospital shares our commitment to promote and defend the dignity and sanctity of human life.