

NEWS

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Local doctor takes a stand against destruction of embryos

FORT MYERS, Fla. (Dec. 20, 2007) – Dr. Craig Sweet, M.D. of Specialists in Reproductive Medicine and Surgery has reformed office procedures regarding the destruction of cryopreserved embryos.

Most patients undergoing In Vitro Fertilization have excess embryos that are cryopreserved for future use. The most common options for cryopreserved embryos, as set forth by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), include: 1) use of the embryos by the couple themselves; 2) donation of the embryos anonymously to infertile couples or individuals; 3) donation of the embryos to scientific research; or 4) discarding of the embryos.

To educate couples on alternate options regarding their excess embryos, Specialists in Reproductive Medicine and Surgery will encourage them to explore alternatives, such as, donating them to research at Harvard Medical School or couples who cannot conceive on their own.

“It was difficult to offer patients the choice of destroying normal embryos when there were many patients waiting for donated embryos,” said Dr. Sweet. “While destruction occurs to a minority of the embryos stored here, the staff at SRMS decided that we would no longer provide the destruction option to our patients. This viewpoint is consistent with our overall philosophy that embryos deserve a level of respect above that of simple cellular material and that some good needed to come from their existence.”

Most reproductive endocrine practices still offer embryo destruction as an option to their patients. The making of an independent decision regarding the cryopreserved embryos is

supported by ethical guidelines set forth by ASRM, American Medical Association and the American Bar Association.

To fully comply with ASRM guidelines, the patients are also free to transport their embryos to another facility for destruction.

Specialists in Reproductive Medicine & Surgery is a reproductive endocrinology & infertility practice open since 1991. Dr. Sweet is board certified in both the specialty of Obstetrics & Gynecology and the subspecialty of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. He is a member and former Chairman of the Lee Memorial Health System HealthPark Ethics Consultation Group and currently serves on the Lee County Medical Society Board of Governors. For more information, call (239) 275-8118 or, visit www.DreamABaby.com.

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