



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
SINGAPORE

MH 78:20

MOH Circular No. 17/2015

17 April 2015

CEO and Licensee of Approved TOP Institutions

**REVISED GUIDELINES ON TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY**

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has revised the Guidelines on Termination of Pregnancy (TOP). The key revisions are summarized below.

**I. EXTENSION OF PRE-ABORTION COUNSELLING**

2. With the implementation of the revised Guidelines on TOP, the pre-abortion counselling shall now be provided to **ALL** pregnant women seeking termination of pregnancy in Singapore, regardless of nationality, educational level and number of children whom the women have given birth to.<sup>1</sup>

**II. REFRESHER TRAINING COURSE FOR ABORTION COUNSELLORS**

3. All existing abortion counsellors of an approved institution **MUST** undergo the refresher training course before the approved institution applies to renew its approval.

4. Abortion counsellors who have not provided abortion counselling for a period of 2 years or more, and who are keen to resume providing abortion counselling, are also required to first undergo the refresher training course.

**III. RECOMMENDED COUNSELLING COMPONENTS FOR PRE AND POSTABORTION COUNSELLING**

5. The recommended counselling components for the abortion counselling sessions are appended in Annex B of the revised Guidelines on Termination of

<sup>1</sup> The Guidelines on TOP issued in April 2004 stated that pre-abortion counselling must be provided for a pregnant woman, regardless of her marital status, who:

- (a) is a Singapore citizen or permanent resident;
- (b) has passed the primary school leaving examination (PSLE);
- (c) has at least some secondary education; and
- (d) has less than three children.



Pregnancy. Nonetheless, the abortion counselling sessions should be tailored in accordance to the needs of the pregnant woman, as and when necessary.

#### **IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

6. For pre-abortion counselling for girls below 16 years of age (except for rape victims), the Certificate of Attendance form shall be attached to the patient's case notes by the approved institution performing the abortion procedures for documentation and audit purposes.

7. Annex F of the revised Guidelines on Termination of Pregnancy ("Guidelines on Requirements for Premises to be used for the Treatment to Terminate Pregnancy") makes clear that sufficient lighting and emergency lighting shall be provided for the operating room.

#### **V. EFFECTIVE DATE**

8. The revised Guidelines on Termination of Pregnancy will take effect from 17 April 2015, and supersedes the current Guidelines on Termination of Pregnancy which were issued in April 2004.

#### **VI. FOR COMPLIANCE**

9. Please ensure that a copy of this circular is circulated to all relevant staff for their information and compliance.

10. In addition, you may refer to paragraphs 2.1 and 6.1 of the revised Guidelines for updated website links for the (i) application and qualification as approved institution; and (ii) returns/ reports on requests for treatment to terminate pregnancy.

11. For further clarifications, please email [moh\\_hospital\\_services@moh.gov.sg](mailto:moh_hospital_services@moh.gov.sg).

Thank you.



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# **GUIDELINES ON TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY**

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

17 APRIL 2015

# MINISTRY OF HEALTH GUIDELINES ON TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

## 1 CARRYING OUT TREATMENT TO TERMINATE PREGNANCY

- 1.1 Every treatment for terminating pregnancy shall be carried out by an authorised medical practitioner in an approved institution.
- 1.2 Under the Termination of Pregnancy Act (TOP Act), an authorised medical practitioner shall not carry out treatment for the termination of pregnancy on any pregnant woman other than:
  - (a) a citizen of Singapore or the wife of a citizen of Singapore;
  - (b) a holder or the wife of a holder of a work pass issued under the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act; or
  - (c) a person who has been resident in Singapore for at least 4 months immediately preceding the date on which the treatment is to be carried out,unless the treatment is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman.
- 1.3 In relation to the holding of a work pass under paragraph (b), the holding of a temporary work permit by the pregnant woman or her husband is itself insufficient. The pregnant woman or her husband must be the holder of a work pass issued under the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act.
- 1.4 No treatment for terminating a pregnancy of more than 24 weeks can be carried out unless the treatment is immediately necessary to save the life or to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman.
- 1.5 The termination of a pregnancy must be at the request of the pregnant woman and with her consent.

## 2 APPLICATION AND QUALIFICATION AS APPROVED INSTITUTION

- 2.1 An application to the Minister for the approval of any institution, hospital, maternity home, clinic or other place as an approved institution shall be in Form I set out in the Schedule to the Termination of Pregnancy Regulations (Regulations) or in the form set out in the electronic licensing system of the Ministry of Health at <https://elis.moh.gov.sg>.
- 2.2 The Minister may cancel the approval for the use of any place as an approved institution and/or the medical practitioner's authorisation to

carry out treatment to terminate pregnancy if any authorised medical practitioner contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of the TOP Act or Regulations and any conditions specified by the Minister in authorising the medical practitioner to carry out treatment to terminate any pregnancy.

### **3 APPLICATION AND QUALIFICATION AS AUTHORISED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

- 3.1 An application to the Minister for a medical practitioner to be authorised to carry out treatment to terminate pregnancy shall be in Form II set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.
- 3.2 Only specialists with Obstetrics & Gynaecology qualifications<sup>1</sup> will be given approval to terminate pregnancies that are up to 24 weeks duration.
- 3.3 Each medical practitioner in private practice who applies to the Minister for authorisation to carry out treatment to terminate pregnancy shall be approved to carry out treatment for the termination of pregnancy at only one specified approved private medical clinic. However, where such an authorised medical practitioner is also accredited to work in a hospital approved to carry out treatment for the termination of pregnancy, the medical practitioner may also perform such treatment at that approved hospital.

### **4 APPROVED INSTITUTIONS**

- 4.1 A hospital or clinic which is an approved institution for the carrying out of treatment for termination of pregnancy must submit to the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Form I of the Schedule to the Regulations the names of the authorised medical practitioners accredited to carry out treatment for the termination of pregnancy in that approved institution.
- 4.2 An approved institution must maintain its premises in a reasonable state of cleanliness and to provide a qualified medical practitioner, a nurse, a trained counsellor and, where general anaesthesia is to be induced, an anaesthetist during the termination of a pregnancy.
- 4.3 The approved institution must promptly inform MOH when any of its authorised doctors leaves its employment.

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<sup>1</sup> See regulation 3(2) of the Regulations.

## 5 MANDATORY COUNSELLING

### 5.1 Trained Abortion Counsellor

Every approved institution shall have amongst its personnel at least one doctor or nurse who has undergone a course of training in termination of pregnancy counselling conducted in the manner directed by the Director of Medical Services. If the trained counsellor leaves the employment of the approved institution, the approved institution is required to inform MOH within 2 weeks. A maximum grace period of 6 months will be allowed for the approved institution to employ a replacement counsellor or make arrangements to satisfy the mandatory counselling requirement, failing which the approval to the approved institution to carry out treatment for termination of pregnancy will be cancelled.

### 5.2 Refresher Training Course for Trained Abortion Counsellor

This refresher training course will be conducted by KK Women's and Children's Hospital. All existing abortion counsellors of an approved institution must undergo the refresher training course before the approved institution applies to renew its approval. Abortion counsellors who have not provided abortion counselling for a period of 2 years or more, and who wish to resume providing abortion counselling, are also required to first undergo the refresher training course.

5.3 **Pre-abortion counselling<sup>2</sup>** must be provided for all pregnant women seeking treatment for termination of pregnancy in Singapore.

5.4 **Pre-abortion counselling for girls below 16 years of age (except for rape victims)**

It is mandatory to refer an unmarried girl below 16 years of age for pre-abortion counselling at the Health Promotion Board Counselling Centre when she seeks treatment to terminate pregnancy. A Certificate of Attendance (COA) will be issued to her by the Health Promotion Board Counselling Centre. No termination of pregnancy can be performed unless the COA is produced by the girl. The COA form shall be attached to the patient's case notes by the abortion institution performing the abortion procedures for documentation and audit purposes. The steps for pre-abortion counselling are illustrated in Annex A.

### 5.5 Time Lapse

The pregnant woman is required to sign a declaration that she has been counselled and gives her written consent to the treatment in Form III set out in the Schedule to the Regulations. At least 48 hours must elapse

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<sup>2</sup> Contents of pre-abortion counselling may be adapted for women diagnosed with foetal abnormalities.

after pre-abortion counselling before the pregnant woman can give her written consent to treatment.

#### 5.6 **Contents of Counselling**

The pre-abortion and post-abortion counselling sessions for the pregnant woman shall cover the items set out in Annex B at the minimum. The abortion counselling sessions shall be tailored in accordance to the needs of the pregnant woman, as and when necessary.

#### 5.7 **Declaration Form**

The woman requiring treatment to terminate her pregnancy shall also sign a declaration in Form IV set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.

#### 5.8 **Post-abortion counselling<sup>3</sup>**

Every authorised medical practitioner shall provide counselling to a woman who has had her pregnancy terminated. Such counselling shall be given on the day when the termination of pregnancy procedure is carried out. The counsellor has the flexibility to conduct the post-abortion counselling at any time during the admission for the procedure, either before or after the procedure. The actual timing would best be determined by the doctor, based on his assessment of the patient, her condition and type of anaesthesia or sedation that she would be given. Where the counselling is conducted after the procedure, it shall be given only after the woman has fully recovered from the effects of anaesthesia or sedation.

5.9 Every approved institution shall provide the following facilities for counselling and such facilities shall, where applicable, be in proper working condition:

- (a) television set
- (b) video player
- (c) video on abortion produced by Health Promotion Board (refer to Annex C)
- (d) pamphlets produced by Health Promotion Board (refer to Annex C)

5.10 Pre- and post-abortion counselling shall include personal counselling by a trained counsellor, the viewing of the video and reading of appropriate educational materials produced by the Health Promotion Board for this purpose. The procedure for counselling is illustrated in Annex D.

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<sup>3</sup> Contents of post-abortion counselling may be adapted for women who have undergone sexual sterilization following abortion.

## 6 RETURNS / REPORTS

- 6.1 All authorised medical practitioners must complete and submit to the Director of Medical Services the Report on Request for Treatment to Terminate Pregnancy (in Form VI set out in the Schedule to the Regulations or in the electronic filing system of the Ministry of Health at <https://elis.moh.gov.sg/elis/info.do?task=guidelines&section=GuideTermPregVolSter>). The submission must be made: (i) within 30 days of the pre-termination of pregnancy counselling if no treatment to terminate pregnancy is carried out on a pregnant woman, or (ii) within 30 days of the post termination of pregnancy counselling if treatment to terminate pregnancy is carried out on a pregnant woman. The steps for completion of the report are illustrated in Annex E.
- 6.2 Every authorised medical practitioner shall submit to the Director of Medical Services annually a return on the personnel and facilities available for counselling in Form V set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.

## 7 REGISTER

Every approved institution shall maintain a register solely for recording particulars of all treatments to terminate pregnancy carried out in the institution. The register shall contain the following particulars:

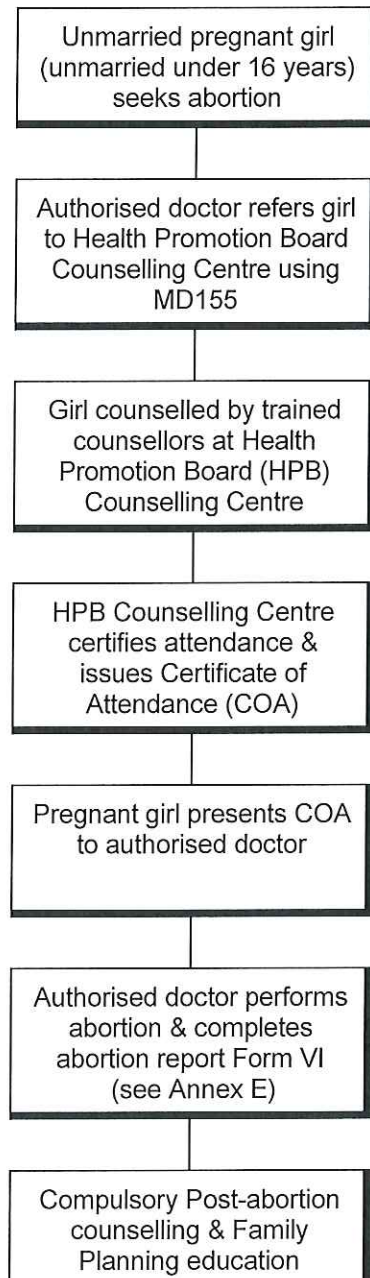
- (a) name of operating theatre
- (b) name of authorised medical practitioner who carried out the treatment
- (c) name of patient as indicated in her identity card or passport
- (d) identity card or passport number of patient
- (e) date of operation; and
- (f) method of termination of pregnancy.

- 8 **PHYSICAL FACILITIES / EQUIPMENT** used in the premises for carrying out the treatment to terminate pregnancy shall be in accordance with the "Guidelines on Requirements for Premises to be used for the Treatment to Terminate Pregnancy".

- 9 **THE IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS** under the Termination of Pregnancy Act & Regulations are illustrated at Annex F.



**FLOW-CHART FOR PRE-ABORTION COUNSELLING**  
**FOR UNMARRIED UNDER-16 GIRLS**



**COMPONENTS FOR ABORTION COUNSELLING FOR PREGNANT WOMEN  
SEEKING TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY****[A] PRE-ABORTION COUNSELLING**

S/N	Component	Covered with pregnant woman	
		Yes	No
1	Viewed counselling video		
2	Read educational materials listed in Annex C.		
3	Personal counselling a) Exploration of attitude about children b) Exploration of relationship with the patient c) Exploration of the reason for patient wanting to undergo abortion d) Holistic information on the risks from the abortion procedure e) Exploration of other alternatives		

**[B] POST-ABORTION COUNSELLING**

S/N	Component	Covered with pregnant woman	
		Yes	No
1	Viewed counselling video		
2	Information on risks of repeat abortions		
3	Counselling on family planning and ensure patient adopts a family planning/ contraception method		

**EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY  
COUNSELLING**

The following are available from Health Information Centre at Level 3, Health Promotion Board, 3 Second Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168937.

**1 ABORTION COUNSELLING VIDEO**

Abortion counselling video entitled "Abortion-Consider with Care" available in 3 languages (English, Mandarin & Malay).

**2 PAMPHLETS**

Examples of the pamphlets include:

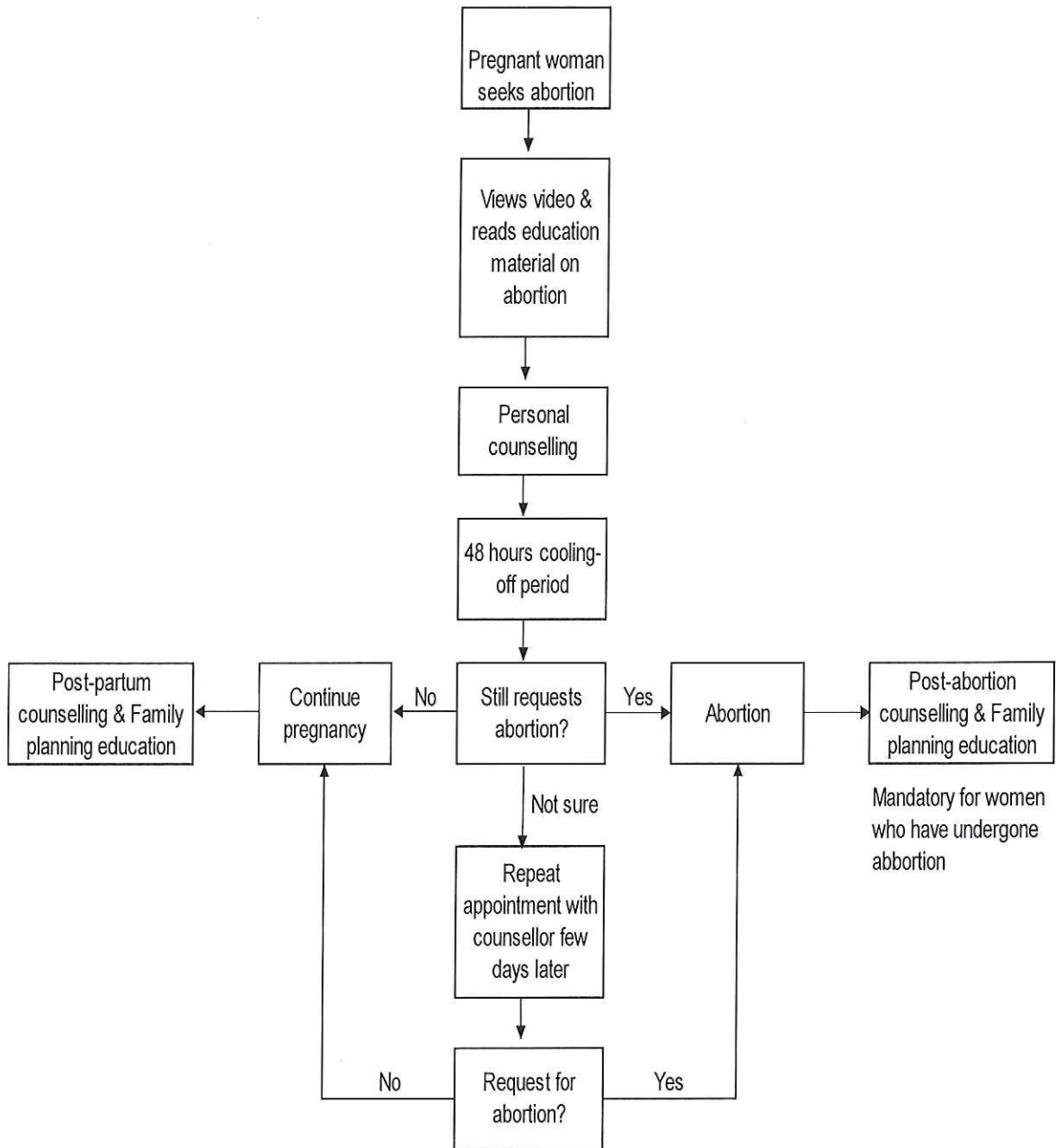
- a. ABORTION the FACTS [as at March 2010] \*\*
- b. Contraceptive Methods which one is best for me [as at August 2013]
- c. The Truth about Abortion [as at February 2009] \*\*\*
- d. Teen Talk [as at February 2003] \*\*\*
- e. BARE FACTS On Sex [as at January 2011] \*\*\*

For request of the above print materials, please contact Health Information Centre at Tel: 6435 3954 or Fax: 6536 1277.

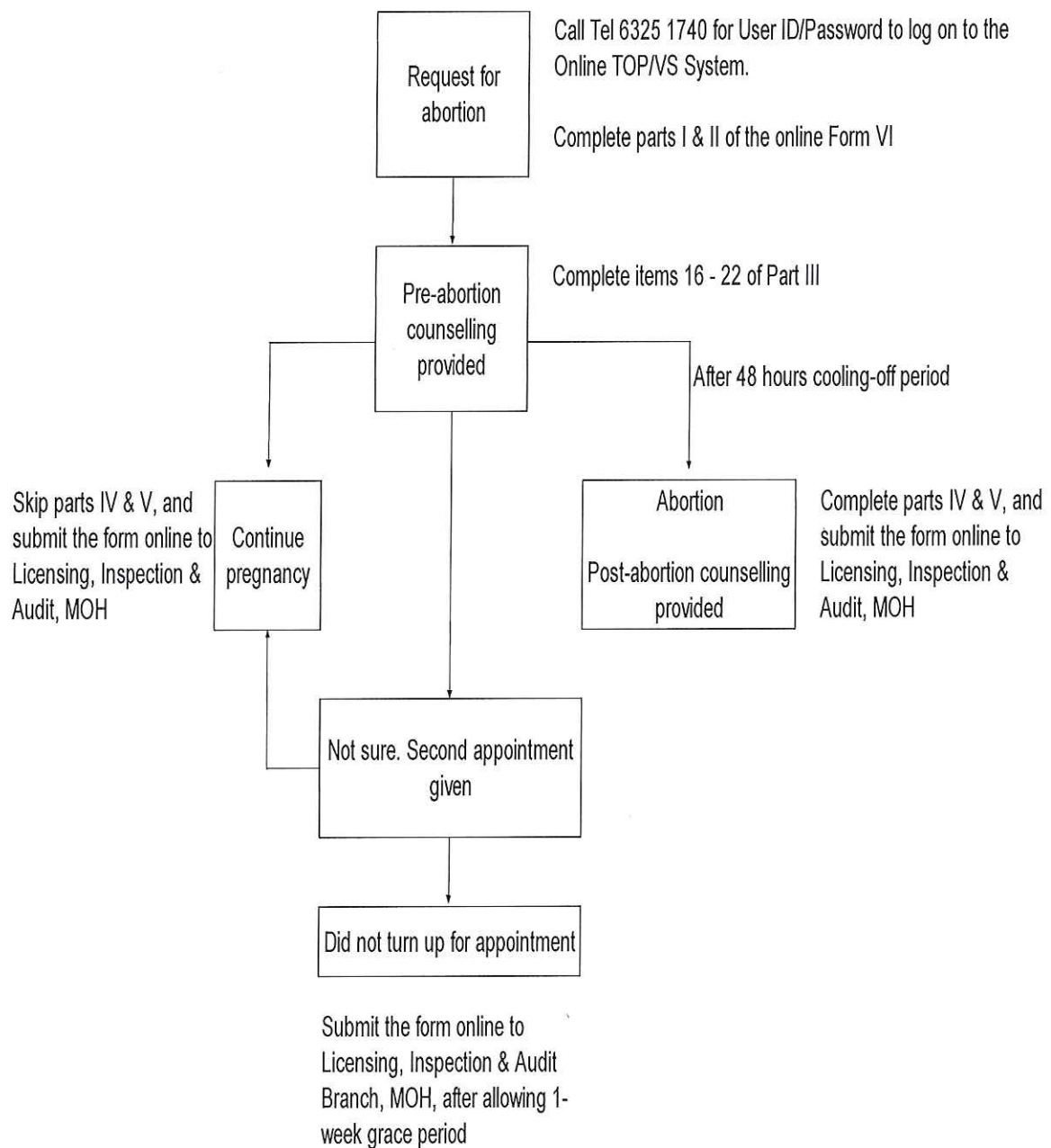
\*\* must be given to the woman to read

\*\*\* given to pregnant women under the age of 16 by HPB

**PROCEDURE FOR ABORTION COUNSELLING**



**STEPS FOR COMPLETION OF REPORT ON REQUEST FOR TREATMENT TO  
TERMINATE PREGNANCY (FORM VI) ONLINE AT WEBSITE:  
[HTTPS://WWW.MOH-TOPVSRETURNS.GOV.SG/LOGIN](https://www.moh-topvsreturns.gov.sg/login)**



**IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY ACT  
AND REGULATIONS**

**Termination of Pregnancy Act**

- |     |   |              |
|-----|---|--------------|
| (a) | Termination of pregnancy (TOP) must be done by an authorised doctor with the written consent of the woman | Section 3(1) |
| (b) | Women who are eligible to have TOP done in Singapore  | Section 3(3) |
| (c) | TOP not to be carried out if pregnancy is of more than 24 weeks duration unless in special circumstances  | Section 4    |

**Termination of Pregnancy Regulations**

- |     |   |                        |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| (a) | Every approved institution must have a trained abortion counsellor  | Regulation 4           |
| (b) | Mandatory counselling for women who request for TOP   | Regulation 5(1)        |
| (c) | Mandatory pre-abortion counselling for unmarried girls below 16 years. No TOP to be performed unless the girl produces a Certificate of Attendance (Form VII). (See Flowchart at Annex A) | Regulations 5(2) & (3) |
| (d) | Time lapse of 48 hours before the women give written consent for TOP  | Regulation 6(1)        |
| (e) | Consent for TOP (Form III)  | Regulation 6(2)        |
| (f) | Declaration Form (Form IV)  | Regulation 6(3)        |
| (g) | Annual return on provision for TOP counselling facilities (Form V)  | Regulation 8           |
| (h) | Report to the Director of Medical Services on request for TOP (Form VI)   | Regulation 9           |
| (i) | Maintaining a <u>register</u> of treatment to terminate pregnancy   | Regulation 10          |

**Note:** **The Termination of Pregnancy Act and Regulations** can be purchased from Toppan Leefung Legal Publishing, 1 Kim Seng Promenade #18-01/06 Great World City East Tower Singapore 237994. They are also accessible at <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg>.

**GUIDELINES ON REQUIREMENTS FOR PREMISES TO BE USED FOR THE  
TREATMENT TO TERMINATE PREGNANCY**

**1. Operating Room**

a) **Room Space**

At least 3 metres x 4 metres in dimensions with sufficient space for free movement. Room shall be used for operation and examination of patients.

b) **Air-conditioning:**

The room shall be air-conditioned.

c) **Lighting:**

Sufficient lighting and emergency lighting shall be provided.

Angle-poised light source could be used for termination of pregnancy. Illumination level shall not be less than 20,000 LUX at task with one metre clearance height. The colour temperature of the light shall be between 3,000K and 6,000K.

d) **Wall & Ceiling:**

For easy cleaning, the wall and ceiling shall be of smooth surface. Wall shall preferably be tiled.

Wall shall be covered with durable washable paint or washable impervious material.

e) **Door:**

The width of the door shall not be less than 1.2 metres.

f) **Floor:**

The floor shall be covered with smooth washable material. Preferably tiled. Wooden flooring and carpets are not permitted.

g) **Partition of Room:**

Full partition is required for room used for treatment.

h) **Cleanliness**

Tidiness and cleanliness shall be maintained at all times. Room shall be thoroughly cleaned before and after each operation.

## **2. Equipment**

- a) Proper operating table with facilities for tilting shall be used.
- b) Adequate and appropriate equipment shall be used for termination of pregnancy.
- c) Surgical instruments used for invasive procedures shall be rendered sterile by the appropriate procedure of sterilisation such as steam autoclaving or alternatively use sterile disposable instruments.
- d) Hand brush and antiseptic preparations eg Chlorhexidine or providone-iodine shall be used for hand washing before operation.
- e) Sterile gloves, gowns & hand towels shall be used during the operation. The doctor shall wear mask, goggles and surgical cap.
- f) Medical and surgical equipment, instruments, appliances and materials shall be functional, effective and comply with established or recommended procedures for their maintenance and use.
- g) No unnecessary equipment/furniture shall be kept in the operating room.

## **3. Emergency facilities**

The following emergency drugs and equipment for resuscitation shall be available at all times:

- a) Injection Atropine
- b) Injection Adrenaline
- c) Antihistamines - e.g. injection Phenergan or Piriton
- d) Injection Calcium Gluconate 10 %
- e) Steroids - e.g. injection Hydrocortisone or equivalent
- f) Injection Sodium Bicarbonate 8.4%
- g) Intravenous infusion set & cannulas
- h) Intravenous solutions - eg Hartman's
- i) Airviva & airways
- j) Motor suction apparatus