



GUAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

GMH: Safe, Effective Pain Management for Childbirth Available

(Friday, January 26, 2024; Tamuning, Guam) The Guam Memorial Hospital Authority (GMHA) is ensuring pregnant mothers and the community at large that epidurals for the safe management of pain during pregnancy remain available at GMHA.

However, a particular medication used for the same purpose is unavailable due to delays in manufacturing, resulting in a national shortage.

According to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, more than 60% of laboring mothers receive an epidural for pain relief. Research has shown that epidurals are a safe and effective pain relief alternative for most laboring mothers and their babies. Complications from an epidural are extremely rare. Side effects are also uncommon, the most common being soreness and/or itchiness where the epidural was administered, but it doesn't last.

Other myths associated with epidurals have also been disproven. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), no evidence or research proves epidurals are harmful to babies. The amount of medication that reaches the baby is too small to cause harm.

GMHA wants to assure pregnant women that they can have a safe labor and delivery of their newborn with an epidural. Epidurals are a proven, effective method of pain relief with a very low instance of side effects. For women who prefer not to have an epidural, there are other pain medications available.

Due to manufacturing delays and a subsequent national shortage, which may be resolved in April, GMHA is presently without Stadol, another drug used to manage pain in pregnancy.

Despite the challenges certain drug manufacturers face, GMHA continues to deliver quality care to expectant mothers and their newborns daily.

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