

**Saturday, 19 August 2017**

**PPIS on the setting up of the Milk Bank by KKWCH and the corresponding Fatwa by the Office of Mufti**

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The Singapore Muslim Women's Organisation (PPIS) acknowledges the need for the setting up of the Milk Bank as a means of nutrition for premature babies.

We concur with the scientific findings of the benefit of human milk on preterm infants even when mother's own milk is unavailable. We are aware that the KK Human Milk Bank will offer preterm babies 34 weeks old and below after parental consent; stopped when the mother has enough of her own milk to offer, or when the baby reaches 34 weeks old or weighs at least 1.8 kg.

While all hygiene factors may have been considered and processes put in place to protect the infant's health from cross-contamination of milk, PPIS also draws concern over the social implication of infants from Muslim mothers who receive milk feeds from donor milk – i.e. on the status of *marhamiyah* (*kinship or relations that bar marriage*).

PPIS foresees that Muslim mothers may show reluctance to permit hospitals from offering alternative human milk source to help their preterm infants, out of fear of the religious implications akin to having milk mothers that are unknown to the infant's family. By this implication, a Muslim mother may also encounter resistance from her spouse or significant members of the family who adhere to a more conservative view, preventing the consent to be given.

On this concern, PPIS is satisfied with the explanation by the Office of Mufti on the Fatwa regarding the setting up of the Milk Bank released on 17 August 2017.

PPIS agrees with the Fatwa's Committee's view that due to the existence of a situation of great difficulty (*masyaqqah*) which brings about the need for a solution for preterm infants, the plans for the setting up of the Milk Bank is aligned to the objectives of Syariah on the need for the preservation of human life.

PPIS' concern over the status of *marhamiyah* is also assuaged by the considerations made by the Fatwa Committee, and clear explanation on how they come to a decision.

PPIS hopes that with the release of this Fatwa, the Muslim mothers will not only have peace of mind when faced with the need to make such decisions, but will also be a willing participant to donate to the milk bank as member of a compassionate community.