A BIOETHICAL STUDY OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE IN CATHOLIC-AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

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Through this Society for Family Planning’s Junior Investigator Award Dr. Lori Freedman gained training and expertise in bioethics in order to inform her research and writing about Catholic hospital obstetric care. One important goal during the grant period was for Dr. Freedman to create a bioethical framework regarding restrictions on reproductive health care in religious hospitals which would help frame a sociological crossover book she is writing on the topic of Catholic health care in the U.S. Dr. Freedman gained training in the field of bioethics during the award period through an intensive course in bioethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, through coursework, and through one-on-one mentorship with Drs. Jodi Halpern (UC Berkeley) and Elena Gates (UCSF). Ongoing research involves qualitative interviews with Catholic hospital physicians and patients.

Dr. Freedman completed the training, authored two peer reviewed articles and four crossover pieces in popular journalism venues. Her bioethical framework development and book writing is ongoing, components of which have been presented at national conferences during the award period. The beneficiary has relished the opportunity for professional growth and the aid SFP provided to advance this timely research. Catholic hospitals have grown tremendously in recent years, and ob-gyn care under Catholic doctrine is highly constrained, in some cases substandard. This award has been essential to help generate publications and take advantage of media opportunities at a critical time in the evolution of U.S. health care.