

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Pacific Fertility Center and the Law Office of Deborah Wald to Present at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association**

San Francisco, CA – October 4, 2006 – Fertility physician Isabelle Ryan, MD and attorney Deborah Wald, Esq. will present “Establishing Parentage: Legal Issues for Lesbians & Gay Men Using Assisted Reproductive Technologies” at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) Conference. The presentation will discuss important legal and medical implications for gay men and lesbians who are pursuing assisted reproductive technology to create families. Dr. Ryan and Ms. Wald will speak on Thursday, October 12, 2006 from 9:45 am - 10:45 am. The conference takes place October 11-14, 2006 at San Francisco’s Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel.

“Outside of adoption, gay men and lesbians must rely on reproductive medicine to have a child. It is important that they have a thorough understanding of the types of fertility treatments available as well as the current regulatory environment facing the industry,” commented Dr. Isabelle Ryan, Associate Medical Center of Pacific Fertility Center.

Added Deborah Wald, Esq., a lawyer who specializes in family formation law, “When it comes to reproductive medicine, the legal environment facing the gay and lesbian community can be very complex and it varies enormously from state-to-state. It is essential that gay men and lesbians pursuing reproductive medicine be fully aware of the laws so they can take the steps necessary to protect their families.”

Assisted reproductive technology has been shown to be a viable parenting option for gay men and lesbians—including those with and without an infertility diagnosis. Lesbians who wish to become parents often use artificial insemination with donor sperm, often with medical assistance to increase the chances of pregnancy and to create a legal barrier between the donor and the lesbian couple. Gay men wanting to be parents often use a surrogacy process involving either artificial insemination of a surrogate or in vitro fertilization [IVF] of donated eggs with implantation of the resulting embryos into a surrogate. Lesbian couples facing infertility also often resort to IVF procedures, using either their own eggs or donated eggs. These procedures all create different parenting scenarios which, in turn, have different legal implications for the intended parents. In short, ensuring parentage protection among gay and lesbian patients requires a sophisticated understanding of the laws including consideration of genetics, procreative intent parental conduct, and public policies (which have always played a significant role in determining parental rights).

The demand for assisted reproductive technology (ART) in the lesbian and gay community is underscored by the fact that a substantial percentage of gay and lesbian couples and individuals are becoming parents. In fact, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 34 percent of lesbian couples and 22 percent of gay male couples have at least one child under 18 years of age living in their home. Lesbian couples parent at about 75 percent the rate of married heterosexual couples and gay male couples parent at about half the rate of married heterosexual couples. (Source: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/censr-5.pdf>.)

**About Pacific Fertility Center**

Pacific Fertility Center ([www.infertilitydoctor.com](http://www.infertilitydoctor.com)) is the Bay Area’s leading fertility clinic, providing comprehensive diagnosis and treatment for men and women of all sexual orientations. The center is led by five physicians who are all Board Certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. PFC performs advanced fertility treatments such as in-vitro fertilization and artificial insemination.

**About The Law Office of Deborah Wald**

Located in San Francisco, The Law Office of Deborah Wald (<http://www.waldlaw.net/>) specializes in family formation law including adoptions of all kinds, donor contracts for egg and/or sperm donations, surrogacy, co-parenting agreements, and parentage actions. Deborah Wald is a member of the Academy of California Adoption Lawyers/Academy of California Family Formation Lawyers and is Chair of the Family Law Advisory Council of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. A teacher and public speaker as well as a lawyer, she frequently presents workshops at national and international conferences on contemporary family law issues.