



Date

Physician's Name

Address, VA, ZIP

Attention: RE: Virginia Paternity Establishment Program (VPEP)

Dear (name):

As you know, having a new baby is an exciting, life changing event! One way to help your unmarried patients prepare for their baby is to help them have both parents named on the birth certificate. When parents are unmarried, the father's name is not included on the birth certificate unless a simple Acknowledgement of Paternity (AOP) form is completed at the time of birth or after. There are many benefits to establishing paternity. These benefits include:

1. Self Esteem- Generally children respond better when given love and support from both parents.
2. Shared Parenting- Parenting is the responsibility of both the father and the mother, and more resources are available when both parents share the responsibility of raising their child.
3. Health History- It is important for the child to have a complete medical history, and that is more likely if paternity is established.
4. Important Rights- When paternity is established, the father has the same rights as a father of a child born in marriage. These rights include providing decisions and input that impact the child. Further, if a father dies or is permanently disabled, having a legal father ensures benefits for the child (medical or insurance benefits, inheritance, Social Security, disability or veteran's benefits).
5. Family Identity- When children know they are part of a family, they are likely to be more secure about who they are. Establishing paternity identifies the father's side of the family and encourages relationships with his family.

We would like your assistance in educating your patients about our program. This would will be extremely helpful in ensuring unmarried parents are educated on paternity establishment when they arrive at the hospital to welcome their newborn. The easiest way to assist our program is to allow our materials in your facility wait areas, etc. We have a doctor's card specifically designed for providers' offices as well as poster that explains our program and the benefits of establishing paternity. We will be happy to deliver materials to your office! We thank you in advance for your help in ensuring Virginia's newborns have both parents' names on their birth certificate.

All the best, XXX