

September 2022



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

# Paternity Headlines

## Virginia Paternity Establishment Program

### “Add the Dad”



## Save the Date for our Annual Conference

We will host 4 in-person “tea party”themed conferences this year in Richmond, Roanoke, Loudoun and Portsmouth and one virtual conference will be held for those who are unable to attend an in person conference. We highly recommend attending an in person event to meet area hospital birth registrars, share best practices and network. The virtual conference will be held November 17th from 10am-11:30am. A link will be shared to join the conference. The save the dates for the in person conferences have been emailed but below are the dates and these will be held from 10am-1:30pm.

- November 1st-Richmond
- November 3rd-Portsmouth
- November 10th- Loudoun
- November 15th- Roanoke



*Save the Date*

FOR THE  
VIRGINIA  
PATERNITY  
ESTABLISHMENT  
PROGRAM'S  
*Annual Conference*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH  
VIRTUAL  
(LINK WILL BE PROVIDED)  
10AM TO 11:30AM

**PATERNITY FACTS/FICTION**

The Virginia Paternity Establishment Program (VPEP) is committed to helping unmarried parents understand the importance of having the father's name on their child's birth certificate. Below are some facts and fiction as it relates to paternity establishment.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Facts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child could receive the following benefits by establishing paternity: higher self-esteem, a positive relationship with both parents and extended family members, a more accurate medical history and in the event of a parent's death, social security and inheritance rights.</li> <li>In Virginia, parents can name their child any name they choose.</li> <li>DNA testing is not required if both parents agree they are the biological parents when signing the Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) form.</li> <li>If you are an undocumented immigrant, establishing paternity is confidential. YOU WILL NOT be reported to ICE if you establish paternity.</li> <li>Signing an AOP does not determine child support. The custodial parent can open a case with Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) at any time whether they have established paternity or not.</li> <li>Adding the dad to the birth certificate at the hospital is easy, fast and free! After discharge, you can still establish paternity by signing an AOP form, but there is a \$30 fee.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Fiction (not true)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dad has legal rights, even when he does NOT sign the AOP.</li> <li>You must name your child after the biological father.</li> <li>DNA testing is required before signing an AOP form.</li> <li>You will be reported to ICE if you sign the AOP.</li> <li>Parents will lose Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Women Infant and Children (WIC) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits if you acknowledge paternity.</li> <li>You must add the dad at the hospital. Parents cannot sign an AOP form later.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Scan to view our parent video:

Scan for more FAQs:

VPEP's team is here to help with any questions you may have regarding paternity establishment. You can reach us by phone at 804-265-5826 or by logging on to [www.vapaternity.com](http://www.vapaternity.com).

## Paternity Fact or Fiction Flyer Mailed to Hospitals

Be on the lookout for our new fact or fiction flyer. The flyer has been mailed to all hospitals to use when necessary. The flyer dispels common myths associated with paternity establishment and reiterates the facts of paternity establishment. Hospital staff should distribute the flyer when working with unmarried parents who would find the information useful. If you have not received the flyer, please contact your Outreach Coordinator.



## Quarterly Incentive Program



VPEP announces our quarterly incentive winners every quarter. Our recognition program acknowledges the hard work of birth registrars at hospitals who achieve the following quarterly performance measures:

1. Achieve the state benchmark of 80% or above
2. Zero AOP rejections
3. Increase the PEP rate by 5% or more

VPEP will also issue an annual award to the hospital with the highest PEP rate. Incentives are distributed by Outreach Coordinators and announced via email and the quarterly newsletter.

## Notary Requirement

Did you know that having a current notary stamp is a required component of your job? It is extremely important to obtain and maintain your notary stamp. Did you also know that using an ink stamp for AOPs is standard, however, if your parent lives outside of Virginia then an embossed seal is required? Also remember that it is your responsibility to inform the Office of Vital Records if any of your notary information has changed, such as renewals or a name change. For more information on obtaining and maintaining your notary, please log onto [www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/notary](http://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/notary).

## VPEP Reminders

- New staff hires need to complete annual training within 30 days of hire
- Send copies of AOPs into our office weekly
- Contact your Outreach Coordinator when you need more educational materials
- Keep your notary status current
- Use the resources on our website, [vapaternity.com](http://vapaternity.com)

## VPEP Parent Video

Be sure to ask parents to scan our QR code stickers to view our parent video!



**Remember, the state benchmark for paternity establishment is 80%.**

Each hospital should strive to achieve this PEP rate monthly. Our paternity establishment calculator is located on our website to help you track your hospital's performance. Your Outreach Coordinator will monitor your performance and work with you to achieve the desired benchmark. Your Outreach Coordinator will also work with you to provide a gift card or other incentive for those who meet the 80% benchmark or have a 5% point increase in their PEP rate over the quarter.

## Did You Know VPEP Has a Blog & Social Media?

Establishing Paternity is important! Read our blog to obtain pertinent information regarding paternity establishment at [www.vapaternity.com/resources/blog](http://www.vapaternity.com/resources/blog).

Please follow us on our social media platforms and engage with us:



Va Paternity



Va Paternity



Va Paternity

## Secure Fax reminders...

Thank you all for switching over to our fax system. Below is some feedback to make the process flow better.

1. Only fax or mail your AOPs. We do not need them sent twice.
2. Send AOPs weekly. There are a few hospitals who are sending single AOPs several times a week or faxing single AOPs one by one to us in separate faxes. Sending them in groups is best.
3. On our fax cover sheet, write the number of AOPs you are sending, not the number of pages.
4. Mail AOPs if you are experiencing technical difficulties with sending a fax. Our PO box remains open.

We will contact hospital birth registrars if there is an issue with the faxes we receive. Thanks again for working with us on the secure fax system and please contact us with any questions.



# Quarterly Incentive Awards



## Congratulations!!

### 2022 1st quarter awardees (Jan-Mar)

#### Top Performer:

**Ballad Norton Community Hospital 96.4%**

#### Hospitals with an 80% PEP rate or higher

Ballad Johnston Memorial Hospital  
 Ballad Norton Community Hospital  
 Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital  
 Johnston Willis Hospital  
 Inova Fair Oaks hospital  
 Inova Fairfax Hospital  
 Mary Immaculate Hospital  
 Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital  
 Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center  
 Sentara Obici Hospital  
 Sentara RMH Medical Center  
 Sovah Health Danville  
 Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center  
 Stafford Hospital Center  
 Stonesprings Hospital Center  
 Virginia Baptist Hospital  
 Winchester Medical Center

#### Hospitals with a 5%-point increase or more

Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital  
 Ballad Norton Community Hospital  
 Inova Fair Oaks Hospital  
 Mary Immaculate Hospital  
 Naval Regional Medical Center  
 Reston Hospital Center  
 Riverside Shore Memorial Center  
 Sentara Obici Hospital  
 SOVAH Health Danville  
 Stonesprings Hospital

**Remember, the state benchmark for paternity establishment is 80%.** Each hospital should strive to achieve this PEP rate monthly. Use our paternity establishment calculator located on our website to make sure you are tracking your hospital's performance. Your Outreach Coordinator will monitor your performance and work with you to achieve the desired benchmark.

### 2022 2nd quarter awardees (Apr-June)

#### Top Performer:

**Stonesprings Hospital Center: 90.5%**

#### Hospitals with an 80% PEP rate or higher

Ballad Johnston Memorial  
 Bon Secours St. Francis  
 Bon Secours St. Mary's  
 Carillion New River Valley Medical Center  
 Inova Fair Oaks Hospital  
 Inova Loudoun Hospital  
 Lewis Gale Montgomery  
 Mary Washington  
 UVA Culpeper  
 Prince William Medical Center  
 Reston Hospital  
 Martha Jefferson Hospital  
 Sentara Obici Hospital  
 Sentara Princess Anne Hospital  
 Sentara RMH Medical Center  
 Stonesprings Hospital Center  
 Twin County Regional Hospital  
 Virginia Hospital Center  
 Winchester Medical Center

#### Hospitals with a 5% point increase or more

Augusta Health Hospital  
 Bon Secours St. Francis  
 Fort Belvoir  
 Inova Loudoun Hospital  
 Lewis Gale Medical Center  
 Lewis Gale Montgomery  
 Mary Washington Hospital  
 UVA Culpeper  
 Prince William Medical Center  
 Sentara Careplex Hospital  
 Sentara Princess Anne Hospital  
 Twin County Regional Hospital  
 Wythe County Community Hospital

# VPEP in the Community

## Eastern Community Partner Spotlight: Get on the Bus, Wellness Wednesday

An inspiring partnership continues between the Wellness Wednesday Program of Chesapeake Regional Healthcare and VPEP. The Wellness Wednesday program is designed to help community members overcome the barriers that can interfere with the wellbeing of children, families, and individuals who seek help. It offers resources to help build a healthier and stronger community.

Wellness Wednesdays are held quarterly at four different locations, to make the event more accessible and convenient to those interested and curious about the program. At these events, representatives from over 40 organizations will be ready to offer services such as health screenings, legal aid, housing, employment, self-care opportunities, and when appropriate, school registrations. One of these events was titled, "Get on the Bus."

New to the event was VPEP. VPEP's outreach coordinator, Laphilda Davis, worked with the Wellness Wednesday care manager, Sharon Blackwell, to coordinate the raffling of two \$25 Amazon gift cards as door prizes. Before each winner was drawn, the message that was provided to the audience was that VPEP is an organization helping unmarried parents understand the facts about establishing paternity. The message continued with asking the attendees to visit [vapaternity.com](http://vapaternity.com) for more information on the acknowledgement of paternity form, for facts, myth busters, and contact information.

The event included approximately 150-200 children, 150-200 parents, primary, intermediate, middle, and high school representatives from the South Norfolk Community. For this school registration event, a request was made to have school resources donated and VPEP was happy to assist with the Amazon gift cards because there is some fun in choosing your school supplies and waiting for the Amazon delivery man, to come to your house.

VPEP will continue to work with the Wellness Wednesday Program to spread the message that adding the dad to the birth certificate can be beneficial and research has shown that establishing paternity can have academic, financial, and health, benefits for the babies and children, that Virginia serves.

## Northern Community Partner Spotlight: Augusta Women's Health

The Virginia Paternity Establishment Program (VPEP) is pleased to highlight Augusta Health Care for Women (AHCFW) as a vital community partner. AHCFW is a practice composed of board-certified practitioners and nurse midwives who provide obstetric and gynecological services for women of all ages in Fishersville and throughout Augusta County. They also have a location in Lexington, Virginia. They strive to help women of all ages reach their wellness goals.

Staff members of AHCFW, particularly Kelli Huffer, work in conjunction with the birth registrars in the Birthing Unit at Augusta Medical Center to ensure parents know about their right to voluntarily establish paternity prenatally.

We thank AHCFW for their efforts and support in helping us help Virginia's children.

## Western Community Partner Spotlight: Straight Street

The mission and purpose of Straight Street is to provide a positive Christian environment where at-risk youth can go and obtain the necessary skills and training needed to mature and to discover God's Divine plan for their lives. Straight Street carries out its mission and beliefs through a variety of ministries:

- Inspire Girls teen group meets after school on Thursdays from 3:15-5:15 p.m. Serving 8-10 girls currently. The schedule begins with picking them up from school, coming to Straight Street for a snack (usually pizza, tacos, chicken nuggets, etc.), play a game, do a craft, chat for a bit, then have a devotional time.
- Downtown Prayer & Lunch for the community first Thursdays of every month.
- Parent Life and "Saturday Nights" – a support group for parents on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month and the doors of the facility are open to 6th-12th graders for dinner, free time and games from 6 pm to Midnight.
- Chaplain Services to minister to youth in juvenile detention centers.
- Angel Tree partnered with Prison Fellowship to minister to inmates and their families.
- Mentoring one on one with students weekly.

Straight Street has a heart for the issues that plague urban teens, such as teen pregnancy, providing a safe space, supportive services and community referrals for services outside of their scope for expectant and unmarried teens.