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For immediate release:
May 15, 2009

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Exceptional performance by hospitals in Virginia Paternity Establishment Program recognized

Richmond, Va. – Ten Virginia hospitals are being recognized for their exceptional performance in the Virginia Paternity Establishment Program (PEP).

PEP is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) and is operated by the Center for the Support of Families. The program affords unmarried couples the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity for their child before the mother and baby are discharged from the birthing hospital. The average hospital establishment rate is currently 64 percent. Paternity establishment is one of five measures on which the federal government evaluates Virginia and other states' performance.

“Establishing paternity is a crucial step fathers can take to protect their rights and their child’s rights. Doing so also gives a child a sense of identity and self-esteem,” said VDSS Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr.

A recently-released report by the National Center for Health Statistics indicates a dramatic increase of births to unmarried parents. Forty percent of all births in the U.S. in 2007 were to unmarried mothers. Virginia’s unmarried birth rate is only slightly lower at 36 percent. Last year alone, 13,000 babies left the hospital without a father’s name on their birth certificates.

The following Virginia hospitals are recognized for their outstanding contributions to Virginia’s PEP:

Hospital Name	Total Number of Unmarried Births	Number of Paternities Established	Percent of Paternities Established
Martha Jefferson Hospital – Charlottesville	362	281	77.6%
Carilion Stonewall Jackson – Lexington	129	100	77.5%

Twin County Regional Hospital – Galax	160	122	76.3%
Winchester Medical Center – Winchester	915	695	76.0%
Montgomery Regional – Blacksburg	155	117	75.5%
INOVA Fair Oaks Hospital – Fairfax	574	433	75.4%
Shenandoah Memorial – Woodstock	154	116	75.3%
Smyth County Community – Marion	125	94	75.2%
Sentara Virginia Beach General - Virginia Beach	671	504	75.1%
Culpeper Regional – Culpeper	223	167	74.9%

"The Virginia in-hospital PEP provides fathers the opportunity to give their child an invaluable gift – their name on the child’s birth certificate. I applaud the dedication and success of the exceptional performing hospitals and their staffs," said Nick Young, VDSS deputy commissioner and DCSE director.

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