



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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### **Virginia hospitals recognized for outstanding efforts in establishing paternity**

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

The Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) sponsors PEP, operated by the Center for the Support of Families. The program offers unmarried parents the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge and establish paternity of their newborns before the mother and baby leave the birthing hospital.

Although the paternity establishment rate varies among Virginia birthing facilities, the highest rates were found where the "Family Birthing Center," or OB/GYN unit, has direct oversight of the program.

In 2007, Wythe County Community Hospital (WCCH) ranked 41 in Virginia. In 2008, the hospital assigned the program to the OB/GYN unit, and immediately began seeing a tremendous rate increase. By 2009, this facility was number one. "This has been a positive change for us; the benefit I see is that we don't have to wait on staff from another department to complete the birth certificates," said Rhonda Carr, WCCH nurse manager.

Virginia's hospital paternity establishment rate currently averages 65 percent. "This service is offered for every child born out of wedlock in the Commonwealth. It's the right thing to do for the baby. Every child deserves to have the name of both parents on their birth certificate. It creates a sense of belonging," explained Nick Young, VDSS deputy commissioner/DCSE director.

The number of children born to unmarried parents is growing. Project Manager Lisa Cauthorne of Center for Support of Families said, "In Virginia alone, one-third of the 63 birthing hospitals across the Commonwealth have a majority of unmarried parents delivering there." Of the approximate 90,000 children born in Virginia last year, about one-third had parents who were not married.

These Virginia hospitals are recognized for their outstanding contributions to the state's PEP:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Est. Rate</b>	<b>Unmarried Births</b>	<b>Paternity Established</b>
Wythe County Community Hospital	81.73%	104	85
Lonesome Pine Hospital	80.83%	120	97
Twin County Regional Hospital	79.23%	183	145
Johnston Memorial Hospital	76.40%	250	191
INOVA Loudoun Hospital Center	76.17%	579	441
Smyth County Community Hospital	75.57%	131	99
Montgomery Regional Hospital	75.31%	162	122
Martha Jefferson Hospital	75.15%	334	251
Culpeper Regional Hospital	75.00%	204	153
Carilion New River Valley Medical Center	74.65%	359	268

“The Virginia PEP in the hospitals has been a cooperative joint effort, benefiting the children and their parents by giving the gift of both parents’ names on children’s birth certificates. The Center for the Support of Families, the agency, and the hospitals are to be commended for this outstanding partnership,” said Young.

For a complete list of the 63 birthing hospitals in Virginia and where they rank, visit <http://www.vapaternity.org>.

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