

Paternity Matters

For you... AND your child!

Paternity Matters:

A division of
The Office of
Recovery
Services/
Child Support
Services

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Paternity Matters Made Permanent! Staffing Changes Announced

As many of you know, Paternity Matters began nearly two years ago as an experimental effort to raise Utah's paternity establishment rates.

Two years later, the grant that funded Paternity Matters is coming to an end, but the Office of Recovery Services (ORS) has committed to making Paternity Matters a permanent part of our organization!

To make Paternity Matters permanent, our office has done a little reorganizing and has hired a full-time Paternity Matters Manager: Vickie Gritzmacher.

Getting a full-time position dedicated to Paternity Matters is a big deal by itself, but hiring Vickie is the real triumph! We know that this change will dramatically increase the level of service that our office is able to offer you.

Vickie has been a trusted opinion for us as we've developed Paternity Matters over the past few years, so she is already very familiar with our goals and with the importance of the work that

you do in paternity establishment. We'll let Vickie introduce herself more in a future issue, but we'll just say now that we are extremely excited that she is joining this program, and we know you'll love working with her.

Gaining a full-time manager means that the part-timers, Emilee and Liesa, will assume other duties at ORS. Well, that's the official plan, but never fear: we'll both work hard over the next few months to make this transition smooth, and we will always be willing to work with Vickie to ensure the continued success of this program.

So, thank you for your incredible response to

Paternity Matters during its trial period. We have met many incredible and dedicated people through this project. It is because of your support, your friendships, your willingness to teach us about what you do, and all of your work to help increase Utah's paternity establishment numbers that Paternity Matters has been a success. Keep up the great work!



Facts and Figures

- *During 2007 so far, VDPs have been completed at the hospital in over 50% of all out-of-wedlock births!*

Thank you for all of your hard work!

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Getting to Know You!

Introducing: Shirley Fausett, Cottonwood Hospital

Shirley Fausett lives in Wallsburg with her husband and one son who is attending U of U. Even after 36 years of marriage (wow!), she loves spending time with her husband gardening and volunteering with MTM, a group that takes physically challenged people on hunting trips. She explains that "if someone wants to go hunting, we'll figure out a way to get them there." Her passion for this work comes from the fact that her son is physically challenged, and she knows how much it has meant to him to do something that he loves despite his challenges.

In any remaining spare time, Shirley enjoys reading romance novels and watching old cowboy movies, especially anything with John Wayne. She is drawn to music such as country classics, Celtic, bluegrass, and her new favorite group IL DIVO; and she likes to watch dancing, particularly jive and boogie ballroom dancing competitions and "The Lord of the

*"I'm here
for the baby.*

*That's who
I want
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-Shirley Fausett

Dance."

Shirley has been with Cottonwood Hospital for 28 years and has worked in Health Information Management for the past six years.

She says that she "absolutely loves her job!" She loves babies, and the best part of her job is that she gets to see them everyday. She thinks kids make the world wonderful. In fact, Shirley just loves people and even gets very attached to the parents of the babies.

It is Shirley's love for babies that drives her paternity establishment work. She explains that adults can take care of themselves, but newborn babies are innocent and need to be protected: "I'm here for the baby. That's who I want to protect."

This philosophy comes through in the way she talks to parents about paternity establishment. She often explains to parents that "If something unforeseen happens to you, you want your baby to be protected." She informs parents that paternity establishment protects their rights, too, and makes sure they know that paternity establishment is easiest if it is taken care of in the beginning, at the hospital.

Shirley says other factors contributing to Cottonwood's success are that the nursing staff at Cottonwood are very good about helping her (which is important since there is no other coverage on weekends) and that her own very early schedule allows her to see the mothers each day, even before the doctors!



Thank you, Shirley.

**These babies are lucky to
have you on their side!**

Simplifying the ORS Application

If parents aren't sure who is the biological father, genetic tests are available as a FREE service from ORS.

Now, providing the ORS application to the parents is getting easier!

The number one question that we receive from hospital workers is how parents can obtain genetic tests.

ORS offers parents FREE genetic tests when they apply for paternity establishment services with our office. Even though we establish child support orders at the same time that we establish legal paternity orders, the parents can choose to close the case instead of utilizing our collection services after the order is final.

We already offer our application on the ORS website, but now we are trying to make the process even easier.

First, we recently added a link on the ORS home page at ors.utah.gov called "Application for Services." No more searching through the entire website just to find the application page!

Second, we will release a much shorter version of our application and paternity questionnaire within the next few weeks. Anyone who has ever filled out the current versions of these forms will appreciate the importance of this change!

Third, it will be possible to complete the application online within the next few months.

Finally, we are in the process of building an online application that can be completed and submitted directly to our computer system and caseworkers for processing to open cases much faster.

ORS appreciates your willingness to direct parents to our office if they are not completely positive that they should sign a VDP. We hope that these changes will make these referrals even easier for you and for the parents in the future!



Question and Answer

Q. I recently ordered VDP pamphlets. I received the pamphlets, but I also received a form called "What You Should Know." What am I supposed to do with this form?

A. This form is now the only way to fulfill the legal requirement for giving the parents written notice of their rights and responsibilities before they sign a VDP.

Give this form to each parent and encourage them to read it before they sign the VDP. This form is so important (in fact it is required) that the VDP asks the parents to confirm that they have received it.

So what role does that leave for the VDP pamphlet? Well, the pamphlet is your "sales pitch." It answers beginning questions that many parents have and should do a lot of the educating work for you. The information in the pamphlet should give enough information for parents to decide if they are interested in a VDP. Then the "What You Should Know" form does the official legal work to guarantee that the parents know what they are signing.

Side Note: Interesting Findings about the Importance of In-Hospital Paternity Establishment

In "Fragile Families Research Brief: In-Hospital Paternity Establishment and Father Involvement in Fragile Families" published by Princeton and Columbia Universities in February 2005, researchers found that any type of paternity establishment was associated with higher measures of father-involvement with the child; **however, they found that the effect of in-hospital paternity establishments was stronger than that of out-of-hospital paternity establishments.**

To read more about the
"Fragile Families and
Child Wellbeing Study,"
go to:

<http://cwcw.princeton.edu/ff.asp>



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NEW WEBSITE COMING SOON!

WATCH FOR DETAILS



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"Paternity Matters" was formed by the Office of Recovery Services in 2005 to provide education about the paternity establishment process in Utah. Paternity Matters focuses on three main objectives:

- *Provide training, supplies and support to individuals who work with unwed parents on the Voluntary Declaration of Paternity process in the hospitals.*
- *Educate unwed parents about paternity establishment, methods of establishment, and benefits to the parents and children.*
- *Provide training and educational materials to community groups who work with unwed parents.*

Paternity establishment is important to our communities, to unwed parents, and most of all, to the children!

The Numbers Are In: 2006 Golden Pen Awards

For Outstanding Performance in Paternity Establishment for Calendar Year 2006, the Golden Pen Awards go to:

Less than 100 Out-of-Wedlock Births

Highest Increase by Number: Heber Valley Medical Center (14 more!)
Highest Increase by Percentage: Garfield Memorial Hospital (40% more!)
Highest Overall Percentage: Birth and Family Place (88.89%!)

100 to 499 Out-of-Wedlock Births

Highest Increase by Number: Jordan Valley Hospital (136 more!)
Highest Increase by Percentage: Mountain View Hospital (17.66% more!)
Highest Overall Percentage: Valley View Medical Center (71.94%!)

500 or more Out-of-Wedlock Births

Highest increase by Number: University of Utah Medical Center (227 more!)
Highest Increase by Percentage: Dixie Regional Medical Center (16.81% more!)
Highest Overall Percentage: LDS Hospital (69.57%!)

Congratulations and Thank You!