



Hospital Staff Best Practices for **Paternity Establishment**

DSS
Serving Children and Families

South Carolina's Parenting Opportunity Program strives to ensure the very best for all of South Carolina's children and the role you play in Paternity Establishment is vital! In order to accomplish this goal, we have created a list of "Best Practices" to help you offer the best possible paternity program to your patients. We understand that hospital size, location and other variables may impact the feasibility of these practices. Therefore, we encourage you to modify them to accommodate your hospital's policies and resources.

1. Distribute SCPOP materials to other hospital components that work with expecting mothers. Examples of these are: prenatal classes, pre-admission packets, volunteer services, pre-natal and/or ante-partum services, etc.
2. Place SCPOP materials inside patient rooms, in lobbies, on the nurses station counter, or on bulletin boards. Do whatever you can to make sure patients have the SCPOP brochure before you go to see them.
3. Consider changing or expanding availability of hospital staff to accommodate working fathers by providing an opportunity to fill out the Paternity Acknowledgment on nights and weekends. Train nurses and volunteers to complete the Paternity Acknowledgment during evening and weekend hours.
4. Increase the number of notaries available to complete paternity acknowledgments. Some potential hospital staff that may already be notaries are: chaplains, security officers, social workers, and department managers.
5. Make use of the SCPOP parent video. Get the SCPOP video on the hospital education channel (if you have one) or have it shown with the *Shaken Baby* video.
6. If you work in Medical Records, ask for access to a computer in the Women's Center for you to complete paternity acknowledgments on (or a laptop on a rolling cart that you can take into a patients room) rather than having to go back to your office to complete the PATACK. This will save you a lot of time.
7. Put the link to the SCPOP website, <http://www.state.sc.us/dss/csed/patest.htm>, on your hospital's Women's Services webpage.
8. If you are not located in the Women's Center, call the patient to set up an appointment and encourage them to read or watch any materials about paternity establishment that they already have.
9. Develop a rapport with OB/GYN offices to request a list of moms with expected delivery dates. Use this list to call or mail materials on paternity establishment one month prior to delivery.
10. Create a "Just for Dads" class where you show them the SCPOP video, give them our materials, answer questions, and provide other important information for dads (like the *Shaken Baby* video).
11. Ask everyone besides the mother and father of the baby to leave the room when gathering the birth certificate information and explaining paternity establishment. This will help you get the information more quickly and it will provide increased privacy for your patients. Also, consider speaking with parents separately if you sense that the father feels pressured.
12. Remind parents that if they do not fill out the Paternity Acknowledgment Form at the hospital that they can complete it at their local Vital Records Office at any time (let them know that there is a \$27 fee). Provide SCPOP materials with the confirmation of birth for mothers electing NOT to sign the in-hospital paternity acknowledgment forms in case they change their minds.
13. Have copies of DSS Custodial Parent Application for mothers and Non-Custodial Parent Application for fathers available in case parents would like to pursue DNA testing.
14. Notify the SCPOP office concerning personnel changes in your office and the need for training new/additional staff.

For more information please contact the SC Parenting Opportunity Program toll free at 1.866.914.8786