

# South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program



*Making a world of difference for children  
What a difference a Dad makes!*

## Training Guide Manual

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## SCPOP MATERIALS

- Form 27155 SCPOP Brochure—English Version
- Form 27156 SCPOP Brochure—Spanish Version
- Form 27162 SCPOP POSTER—English Version
- Form 27161 SCPOP POSTER—Spanish Version
- Form 27163 SCPOP PATERNITY TESTING FACT SHEET
- Form 27164 SCPOP MARRIED MOMS PATERNITY FACT SHEET
- Form 27158 DR CARD—English Version

## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual was designed by Veritas-HHS to assist with the administration of the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program (SCPOP), which is sponsored by the Department of Social Services, Child Support Services Division. SCPOP plays an important role in the voluntary paternity acknowledgment process at your hospital.

This manual will provide you with the SCPOP's background and goals and describes the specific processes involved.

Using this manual, you will be able to:

- Understand the background and purpose of SCPOP and its integration into the birth registration process
- Identify and complete the voluntary paternity acknowledgment used in this program
- Answer basic questions about the program
- Know which questions are appropriate to answer; and
- Understand the voluntary paternity acknowledgment process for unmarried parents once the document is submitted

Direct questions about the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program or requests for more brochures, flyers, or information regarding genetic test to:

The Department of Social Services, Child Support Services Division  
South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program  
3150 Harden Street  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Toll-Free Phone: 866-914-8786  
Fax: 803-898-8188  
Email: [scpop@dss.sc.gov](mailto:scpop@dss.sc.gov)

<https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/parents-links-and-resources/>

Please direct any questions about birth certificates or Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments (Pat Acks) to:

**Office of Vital Statistics**

SC DHEC

CO: Registration

2600 Bull Street

Columbia, SC 29201

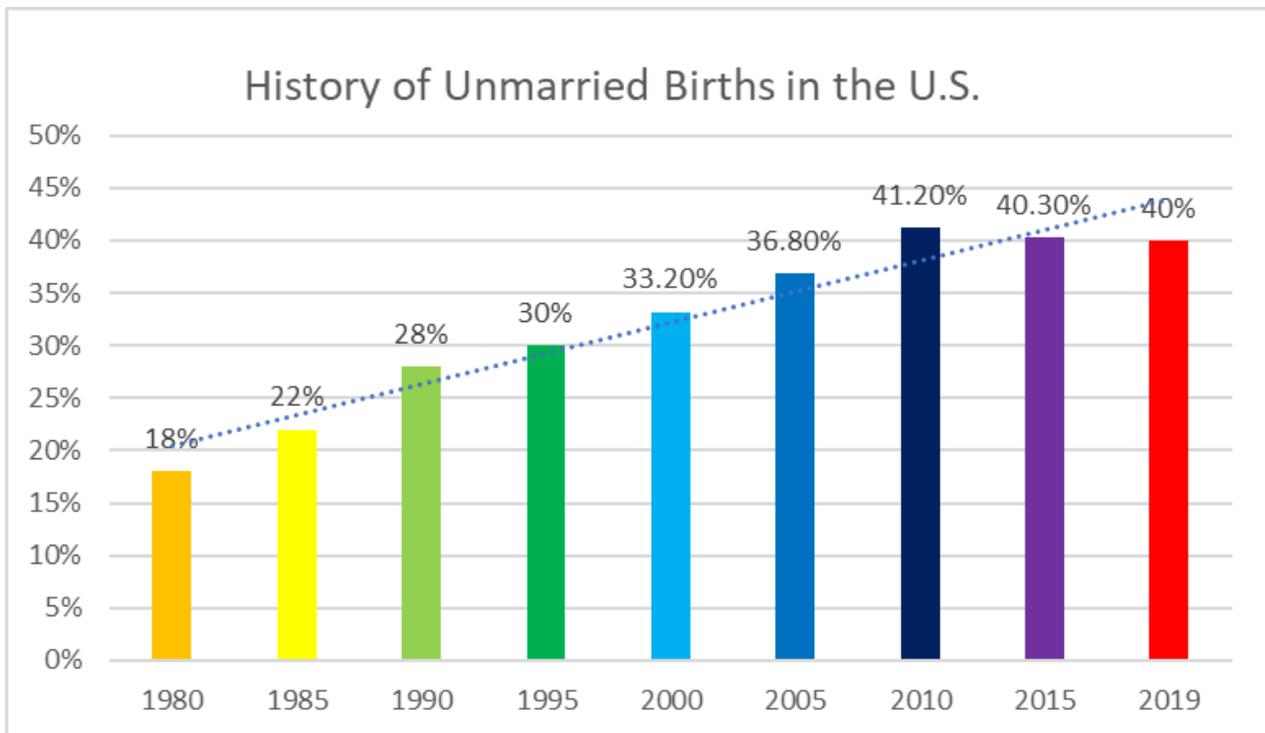
Phone: 803-898-3630

Fax: 803-898-0612

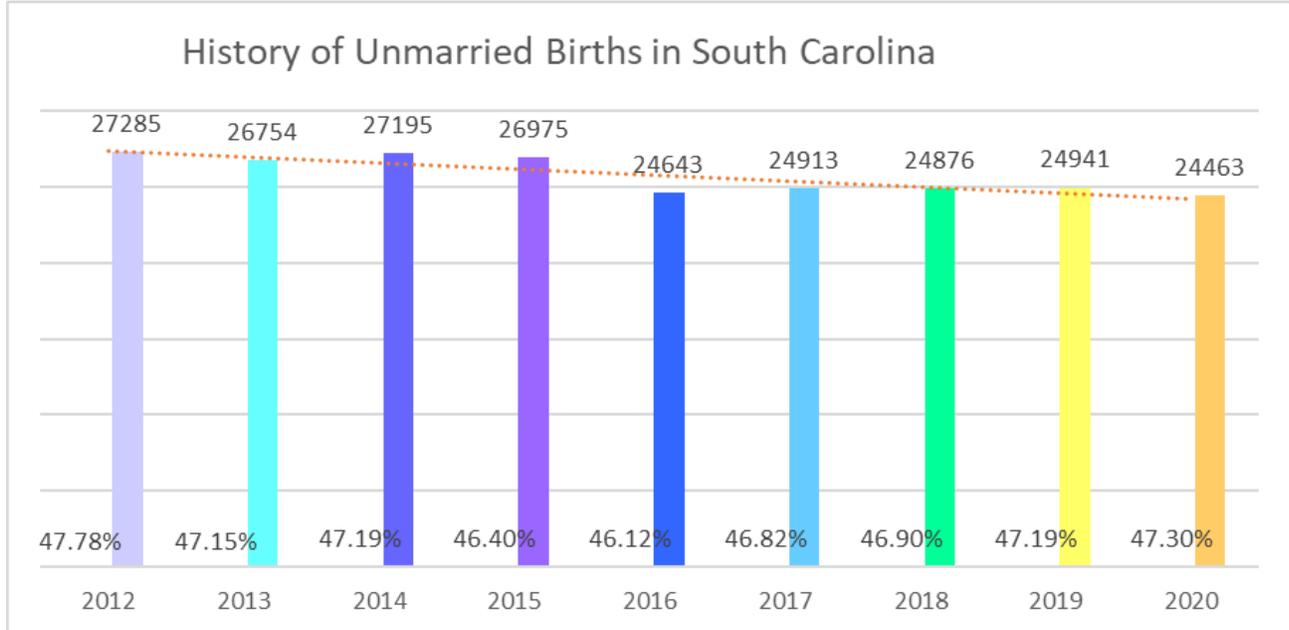
## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

### THE NEED FOR VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Over the past four decades, the number of American children born to unmarried parents has increased dramatically. In 1980, 18 percent of births in the United States were to unmarried parents; by 2019, that number had increased to 40 percent of all births. South Carolina has experienced an even higher increase; in 2019, the unmarried birth rate was 47%, 7 percentage points higher than the national average.



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2021



Source: DHEC 2020

The rising non-marital birth rate has caused great concern among policymakers, largely because high rates of births to unmarried parents are closely related to elevated rates of child poverty and increased welfare dependency. Children who do not have paternity established also are deprived of other benefits, including the economic security of child support, and the potential for social security and veteran's benefits; health insurance coverage; knowledge of medical history, and social identity.

### WHAT IS PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT?

Paternity establishment is needed when a child is born to an unmarried mother and a legal father has not been determined. Paternity means legal fatherhood. Establishing paternity provides the child with a legal connection to both parents.

**Acknowledgment of paternity** is the voluntary process of both parents signing a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment, legally declaring the paternity of a child. (See the *APPENDICES* for a sample of this form.)

**Establishment of paternity** is the legal process of determining fatherhood by court order, acknowledgment, or any other method provided by state law.

### WHY SHOULD YOU HELP WITH PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT?

Legislation on the national and state levels was passed to address the problems that

result when children are born to unmarried parents. Federal and State laws require hospitals to participate in the completion of paternity acknowledgments. This guide assists hospital staff in complying with these laws.

## FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Since 1994, states have been required to offer voluntary paternity acknowledgment opportunities through hospital-based programs. South Carolina's voluntary paternity program has been operational since 1988. In August of 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was enacted. PRWORA required that states adopt additional laws supporting voluntary paternity acknowledgment. These additional provisions were designed to strengthen then existing paternity programs.

Under PRWORA, all states were required to develop procedures for a simple civil process for voluntarily acknowledging paternity. The procedures must provide that before a mother and alleged father can sign a voluntary acknowledgment form, they must be given notice (orally and in writing) of:

- The alternatives to signing the form
- The legal consequences of signing the form
- The rights and responsibilities that arise from acknowledging paternity

The procedures must also specify that the name of the father can be included on the child's birth record only if the mother and father have both signed the voluntary paternity acknowledgment form. The voluntary paternity acknowledgment is considered to be a legal finding of paternity once it is recorded with the State Office of Vital Statistics unless either parent rescinds the voluntary paternity acknowledgment within 60 days of the last signature date. A rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. Therefore, the father's name WILL NOT be removed from the birth certificate. In order to have the father's name removed or to change the child's surname, a certified copy of a court order directing vital statistics to amend the birth certificate is required.

## STATE LEGISLATION

In South Carolina, the Family Independence Act of 1995 was enacted to implement a voluntary paternity acknowledgment process in birthing hospitals. SC State Law 44-7-77 reads "The Department of Health and Environmental Control and the State Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the South Carolina Hospital Association, shall develop and implement a program to promote obtaining voluntary acknowledgments of

paternity as soon after birth as possible and where possible before the release of the newborn from the hospital."

As part of the birth registration process, birthing hospitals are to collect the information about the father needed to establish paternity. If the unmarried parents do not complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, the hospital should try to collect information about the father on the *Putative Father Information* form to assist in the establishment of paternity at a later date.

(See the APPENDICES for a list of Federal and State Laws on Paternity Acknowledgments and In-Hospital Paternity Acknowledgment Programs.)

## WHAT IS THE PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PERCENTAGE?

Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) is a child support performance measure for which the Child Support Services Division is evaluated and held accountable to by the federal government.

The federal PEP goal for all states is 90 percent of all unmarried births having paternity resolved. Meeting that standard allows South Carolina to earn incentive money for the Child Support Services Division and avoid federal penalties to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

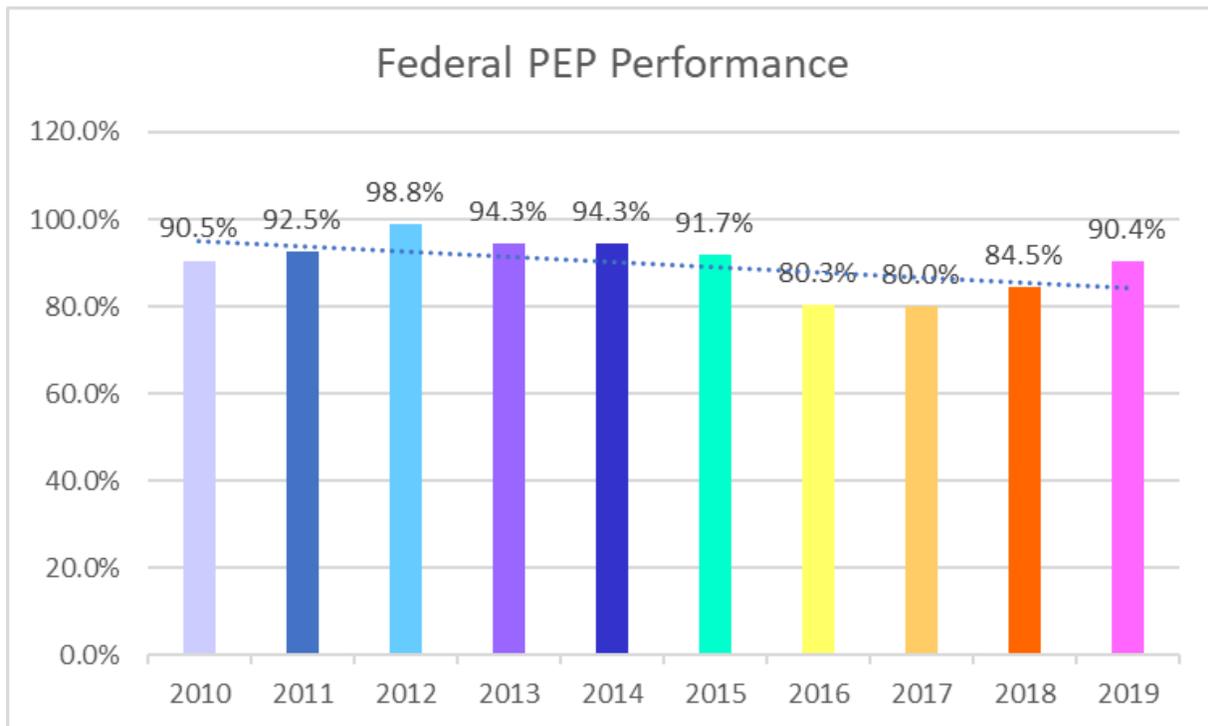


### REMEMBER:

Meeting the 90 percent federal standard allows South Carolina to earn incentive money for the Child Support Services Division and avoid federal penalties to the TANF Program.

One way of calculating the PEP is using what is called a statewide standard, which is calculated by dividing the number of children born to unmarried parents who have paternity acknowledged or established in a given federal fiscal year (FFY) by the number of children born to unmarried parents in the previous year.

South Carolina's history with PEP is shown below:



The in-hospital voluntary paternity acknowledgment rate contributes substantially to the statewide PEP and is calculated by dividing the number of voluntary paternity acknowledgments completed in hospitals by the number of unmarried births in hospitals.

The goal of the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program is to help hospitals achieve and maintain a minimum of a 65 percent voluntary paternity acknowledgment rate.

### **ARE THERE PENALTIES ASSOCIATED WITH PEP?**

As discussed above, South Carolina must maintain a PEP of 90 percent or better. If South Carolina does not meet the 90 percent standard in a given year, the Federal Government will place the State under a corrective action plan that requires a 2 percent increase. If the State meets the 2 percent increase, corrective action stops. If the State fails to meet the 2 percent increase, a penalty can be assessed against the state's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) grant.



#### **REMEMBER:**

The goal of the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program is to help hospitals achieve and maintain a minimum of a 65 percent voluntary paternity acknowledgment rate.

## SECTION 2

### THE SOUTH CAROLINA PARENTING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING PATERNITY

Paternity establishment provides a wide range of potential benefits for children and families, including:

##### Relationship

It is important for a child to know his or her mother and father and to benefit from a relationship with both parents. Once paternity is established, the father is more likely to maintain his relationship with the child. The father's extended family may also be more likely to participate in that child's life.

##### Identity

Children have a need to know both parents and their **FAMILY HISTORY** for a sense of **IDENTITY AND FAMILY BELONGING**. Only when unmarried parents acknowledge paternity will the father's information appear on the child's birth certificate. In the absence of a signed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* (or a formal paternity proceeding), the father's section on the birth certificate remains blank.



##### REMEMBER:

Establishing paternity provides the child with a wide range of potential benefits!

##### Medical

When parents acknowledge paternity, the child will have access to information about medical histories on both sides of his or her family. This is especially important in situations in which the child inherits a medical problem. Additionally, after a father completes a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, he may be able to add the child to his medical insurance policy.

##### Custody and Visitation

If parents are unmarried at the time of a child's birth, the mother is presumed to have custody. However, by completing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* the father can petition the court for visitation rights and/or share in custody arrangements.

##### Adoption

If a father does not acknowledge paternity or add his name to the *Responsible Father Registry*, his child can be adopted by another individual without his consent or permission.

## Financial Benefits

Acknowledging paternity potentially allows the child to qualify for important financial benefits from the father. Possible benefits include social security, life insurance, pensions, veteran's benefits, and inheritance rights if something happens to the father.

## Financial Security

Both parents have a responsibility and are expected to contribute to their child's FINANCIAL and EMOTIONAL SECURITY, because BOTH parents are legally and financially responsible for their child. This reduces the likelihood that either parent will have to apply for financial or medical assistance. If the parents separate and paternity has already been established, it will be easier for the custodial parent to obtain court-ordered child support. Income from child support often keeps a child from living in poverty.

## Legal Rights

Establishing paternity means that a child will have the same **LEGAL RIGHTS** as a child born to married parents.

Clearly, paternity acknowledgment is important for a number of reasons. The voluntary paternity acknowledgment process is supported by the South Carolina Office of Vital Statistics (DHEC), the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program (DSS), and the South Carolina Hospital Association. It provides an easy process that allows parents to establish paternity without going to court. This is a first step toward solidifying the father/child relationship. South Carolina's hospitals, regional Vital Statistics Offices, DSS, and the Vital Statistics state office have formed a unique partnership for the benefit of the state's children and families.



### REMEMBER:

Voluntary paternity acknowledgment is an easy process that allows parents to establish paternity without going to court and is a first step toward solidifying the father/child relationship.

## GOALS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA PARENTING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

The South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program has the potential to increase the number of legal paternity acknowledgments completed for children born to unmarried parents. It is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance the voluntary paternity acknowledgment process that has operated in conjunction with the State's birth registration process
- Encourage unmarried parents to acknowledge paternity voluntarily

- Increase the number and quality of voluntary paternity acknowledgments completed in South Carolina's birthing hospitals
- Educate the staff at South Carolina's birthing hospitals and Regional Vital Statistics Offices about the significant role they play in educating unmarried parents about the importance of acknowledging paternity
- Ensure that the increasing numbers of children born to unmarried parents obtain the benefits that paternity establishment offers
- Improve the self-sufficiency of unwed mothers and reduce welfare costs
- Assist South Carolina in achieving federal performance measures to receive maximum incentive monies and to avoid penalties

## THE ROLE OF HOSPITALS IN PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

South Carolina's hospitals' birth registration staff play a critical role in the success of the paternity acknowledgment process.

Under SC Code of Laws Section 44-7-77 (see *APPENDICES*), hospitals should provide unmarried mothers with the forms and information necessary to acknowledge paternity voluntarily.

Fortunately, South Carolina hospitals already have effective processes for collecting birth information, processing birth records, and completing *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*. Hospitals contribute to the paternity process by:

- Presenting unmarried parents the opportunity to acknowledge paternity voluntarily when their child is born
- Providing parents with informational materials to help them understand what paternity acknowledgment can mean to them and their child
- Orally explaining the rights and responsibilities to all unmarried parents as well as other options they have if the parents are not completely sure he is the father
- Ensuring that paternity forms are processed correctly so the father's information is placed on the child's birth certificate
- Witnessing and notarizing the signing of *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*



### REMEMBER:

South Carolina's hospitals' birth registration staff play a critical role in the success of the paternity acknowledgment process.

- Forwarding completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* to the Vital Statistics State Office

### **THE ROLE OF VITAL STATISTICS IN PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT:**

South Carolina's Vital Statistics Offices play an important role in the paternity acknowledgment process. These offices are responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the state's registration of birth. Specific roles related to the paternity acknowledgment process include:

- Development of standards and instructions for completing the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment
- Establishment of the system or means to complete Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments in a hospital setting during birth registration
- Distributing the rights and responsibilities that must be distributed to all unmarried parents prior to signing a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment
- Offering the opportunity to complete a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment and assisting parents with completing the form outside of a hospital setting
- Maintaining the submitted Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments as prescribed by law
- Maintaining and providing data where required regarding paternity status and hospital performance
- Ensuring that the father's name is added to the birth certificate upon completion and acceptance of a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment

### **THE ROLE OF DSS CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION IN PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), Child Support Services Division (CSSD) assists parents who wish to establish paternity and collect child

support from a noncustodial parent. DSS, in collaboration with DHEC, was responsible for developing a simple process for unmarried parents to acknowledge paternity voluntarily without going to court. DSS established the South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program (SCPOP) to help fulfill its role in the voluntary paternity acknowledgment process. One of SCPOP's main purposes is to assist birthing hospitals with educating unmarried parents. SCPOP trains birth registration staff and provides materials, including brochures, videos, and other educational materials to make unmarried parents aware of their option to acknowledge paternity voluntarily, their rights and responsibilities, and the importance of acknowledging paternity for their children.

South Carolina CSSD hired Veritas HHS, a private service provider, to help with the development of materials, training, and outreach efforts. Veritas HHS serves as DSS/CSSD's liaison and works with hospitals and vital statistics staff in matters relevant to SCPOP and ensuring the program's success.

### **THE ROLE OF REGIONAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICE DIVISION OFFICES IN PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

When child support cases are opened and if paternity is in question, regional CSSD staff will review the information from a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* that are completed in hospitals or at Regional Vital Statistics Offices. CSSD staff will compare the names of the parties with the records from the DHEC interface to determine if paternity has been established. The CSSD worker can then choose the best approach for proceeding with the case either establish paternity and an order for support or if paternity is established proceed with an order for child support.

## SECTION 3

### OVERVIEW OF PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROCESS

#### THE PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROCESS AT THE HOSPITAL

Under South Carolina law, hospitals are responsible for giving unmarried parents the opportunity to legally establish paternity. Hospitals shall provide educational materials to the unmarried parents so they can make an informed decision about whether they should establish paternity. To establish paternity at the time of birth, parents must complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*. (See the *APPENDICES* for a sample of this form) The hospital's role is to ensure unmarried mothers and fathers have every opportunity to complete this form properly and to include the father's information on the child's birth certificate. To fulfill this role, hospitals must:

- Provide trained staff members to meet with unmarried parents
- Inform unmarried parents of their option to establish paternity through a voluntary process, prior to discharge, and provide an opportunity to speak with staff who are trained to explain the process and answer any questions the parents have
- Provide the parents with written information about paternity establishment, such as rights and responsibilities, legal consequences, and alternatives to signing a voluntary acknowledgment
- Show a video presentation discussing the paternity establishment process and their options
- Have staff available to help parents complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* and to notarize the parents' signatures
- Enter the required information into the *electronic* birth system to populate the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement* and print document for notarizations and signatures.

The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* collects much of the same information as the birth certificate. Consequently, hospital staff should process the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* along with the birth certificate and compare the two documents to ensure their accuracy.

## THE PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROCESS AT STATISTICS OFFICES

After the birth information has been transmitted electronically to the Vital Statistics State Office via the EBC (Electronic Birth Certificate) system, parents who did not acknowledge paternity in the hospital must go to a Regional Vital Statistics Office or Vital Statistics Central Office if they wish to acknowledge paternity by completing a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*. Regional Vital Statistics Offices are responsible for providing forms to parents, assisting parents in completing the forms, witnessing, and notarizing the signing of the forms, and sending the forms to the Vital Statistics State Office.

The Regional Vital Statistics Office must check the child's birth certificate to ensure that no other man is listed as the father. If another man is listed, they should refer the parents to an attorney or DSS for assistance.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HOSPITAL STAFF

The following guidelines to the paternity acknowledgment process provide you with some important things to remember.

#### PROVIDING GENERAL INFORMATION TO PARENTS ABOUT PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When unmarried parents arrive at the hospital for the birth of their child, they are excited, but they also may quickly feel overwhelmed by all the forms and information they receive. Their ability to read and understand the written materials you provide about the paternity acknowledgment process may be a challenge considering all that is happening. The short hospital stay also limits your time to answer questions and gather information needed to complete the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* and birth certificate. To fulfill this requirement, and to maximize the chances of parents making informed decisions, consider the following:

- **Parents who receive paternity information in advance of their child's birth will have more time to consider their options and will need less education once they arrive at the hospital.** Many hospitals already distribute information to mothers as part of an overall pre-registration process. If information relating to birth certificates and paternity acknowledgment is not part of the process at your hospital, consider including it or have your delivering doctors distribute information.
- **The distribution of basic information through prenatal care providers will allow mothers and fathers to come to the hospital with a greater understanding of the paternity acknowledgment process and its requirements.** Information relating to paternity acknowledgment should be distributed to the physicians, OBGYN offices, and other prenatal care providers that admit patients to your hospital. A brochure about the voluntary paternity acknowledgment is available for distribution to these entities, and the SCPOP staff are also available for education and outreach efforts.
- When information is introduced to the parents before or at the time of delivery, it is important to understand the sensitive nature of this process. It is also important that parents understand that completing and signing the *Affidavit* is entirely voluntary; never pressure parents into completing the form.

**REMEMBER:**

It is important that parents understand that completing and signing the *Affidavit* is entirely voluntary; never pressure parents to acknowledge paternity.

## INSTRUCTING PARENTS AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Some fathers may not be present when you are preparing the birth certificate. Remind the parents they must both be present to discuss the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, sign the form, and have their signatures witnessed and notarized.

If the parents do not complete the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* in the hospital, and they later want to place the father's information on the birth certificate, they will need to complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement* at a Regional Vital Statistics Office or at the Vital Statistics State Office. Remind them that while there is no fee if the form is completed at the time of birth in the hospital, there is a \$27 fee to complete the form at the Regional or Vital Statistics State Office **(a \$12 non-refundable search fee that includes one birth certificate and a \$15 amendment fee).**

The parents may have questions about their rights and obligations under the law. If the written information does not answer all their questions, advise them to contact the SCPOP helpline at 866-914-8786 or a private attorney. It is illegal to give legal advice unless you are an attorney.

Some parents may wish to obtain genetic testing instead of completing a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*.

***It should be explicitly clear to the parents that if they are uncertain about paternity and are considering a genetic test, they should not complete the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment.*** If parents sign the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* and then get a genetic test that shows the man who signed the form **IS NOT** the father of the child **AND** the 60-day period to rescind the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* has passed, **they will not be able to remove his name from the birth certificate.** The reason for this is that in 1999 South Carolina Law made paternity acknowledgments conclusive evidence of paternity contested only based on fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact.

## FILLING OUT THE FORM

The Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement is an integral part of the birth registration process and is a permanent legal record. Discrepancies or alternations on the form may substantially alter the form's legal integrity. The forms, as with birth certificates, must stand alone through time as substantial legal documents. Basic rules for completing the Paternity Acknowledgment include:

- The form must be typed or printed in permanent black or blue, unfading ink.
- Cross-outs and/or correction tape are not acceptable. As with other alterations to the form, it is impossible to determine if these corrections were made when the form was initially prepared or later. Information typed over correction tape may be easily removed from the paper, exposing the incorrect information.
- The information supplied on the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment must match the information supplied on the birth record.
- Federal law mandates the collection of Social Security Numbers for this program and parents should be advised that they are required to provide them.



- Parents must provide all applicable information requested on the form. In cases where information is not available, e.g., a foreign-born parent lacks a Social Security Number, it is acceptable to leave the field blank. DHEC will not accept Paternity Acknowledgments with missing or incomplete information. If parents refuse to provide the required information, the Paternity Acknowledgment will be rejected, and the father will not be added to the child's birth certificate.
- This is a voluntary program. If the parents wish to participate, they must provide all the required information.
- If there are any questions, contact the Vital Statistics State Office at 803-898-3630.

## SIGNATURES

- Both parents must complete and sign the same form. Both signatures must be witnessed and notarized.
- The notary is responsible for ensuring the parents provide appropriate identification (a valid picture ID) prior to signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*. (See discussion on proper identification on page 29).
- Minor parents may sign the form. A guardian's signature is not necessary.



## ISSUING COPIES OF THE FORMS

The Vital Statistics State Office **does not** issue copies of completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, since the document is not a public record, the Vital Statistics State Office does not issue copies of completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments* unless ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction or the record has been subpoenaed. Hospitals are also not allowed to issue a copy of a completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*.

## PROCESSING COMPLETED FORMS

- After the birth record is completed, along with submitting the completed and signed Paternity Acknowledgment, hospital staff must release the record in DHEC's electronic birth certificate system for processing.
- If there is an error with the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment, Vital Statistics State Office staff will contact the hospital to resolve the issue. Hospital staff are responsible for updating the record or contacting the parents, if needed. If parents do not respond within five business days, hospital staff must remove the father's information from the record in DHEC's electronic birth certificate system and release the record back to Vital Statistics. Hospital staff must inform the parents they can still complete a Paternity Acknowledgment at their local Vital Statistics Office for a fee of \$27 (a \$12 non-refundable search fee that includes one birth certificate plus a \$15 amendment fee).

## SECTION 4

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The instructions below are for completing a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* (DHEC Form 607). **This form is required to add the biological father's information to any birth record where the mother was not married at the time of birth or conception, or any time in between.**

In addition to adding the father's information to the birth certificate, this form constitutes a determination of paternity unless either parent requests a rescission at the Regional Vital Statistics Office or Vital Statistics State Office within 60 days of completing the form. A rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. Therefore, it will NOT remove the man as the legal father of the child. To have the father's name removed or to change the child's surname, a certified copy of a court order directing Vital Statistics to amend the birth certificate is required.

**A *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* can be completed at the hospital when all the following conditions are met:**

- **A mother gives birth in South Carolina.** If the birth took place in another state, the parents should contact the state of the child's birth.
- **The mother was not married at the time of birth or conception, or any time in between.** If the mother was married at any time during the pregnancy, her spouse (or ex-spouse), by law, is considered the child's legal parent. Please note:
  - Even if the mother states another man is her child's biological father, a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* cannot be completed.
  - The name of her spouse (or ex-spouse) must be entered on the birth certificate as the second parent. If she refuses to provide the information, the second parent section can be left blank on the birth certificate.
- **The mother and biological father wish to acknowledge paternity at the time of birth.** To acknowledge paternity, both the mother and father must complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, show proper picture identification, and both their

signatures must be witnessed and notarized. (**Note:** Paternity can also be acknowledged later, after the birth is registered, if the mother and father complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* at a Regional Vital Statistics Office or the Vital Statistics State Office.)

- **The birth record has not already been sent to the Vital Statistics State Office.** If the birth record has been transmitted to the Vital Statistics State Office via the EBC system and the parents wish to acknowledge paternity, they cannot complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* at the hospital. They must complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* at a Regional Vital Statistics Office or Vital Statistics State Office.

The *APPENDICES* contain a list of the Regional Vital Statistics Offices in the state.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMPLETING A VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Question	Yes/No	Follow These Instructions
Is the mother married to the child's biological father?	YES	<b>DO NOT</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> . It is not needed.
	NO	<b>DO</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .
Is the mother married to someone other than the biological father?	YES	<b>DO NOT</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> . The mother's spouse is the legal parent of a child born during their marriage, even if they are separated. The mother must obtain a court order stating the spouse is not the child's parent.
	NO	If the mother is unmarried, <b>DO</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .

Question	Yes/No	Follow These Instructions
Is the mother divorced?	YES	If the mother was divorced more than <b>280 days before the child's birth</b> , then child is <b>NOT</b> considered a child of the marriage. <b>DO</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .
	NO	If the mother was divorced less than <b>280 days before the child's birth</b> , <b>DO NOT</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> . The mother's ex-spouse is considered the child's parent until a court order states otherwise.
Are the mother and alleged father 100 percent sure he is the biological father?	YES	<b>DO</b> complete a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment.
	NO	<b>DO NOT</b> complete the <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> and suggest that they pursue genetic testing prior to signing the form. (Provide the <i>Paternity Testing</i> fact sheet SCPOP form 27163.)
Is the baby's father married to someone else?	YES	<b>DO</b> complete the <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .
	NO	<b>DO</b> complete the <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .
Same Sex Relationship: Is the mom married to female partner?	YES	<b>DO NOT</b> complete a <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> .
	NO	<b>DO NOT</b> complete the <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> . A <i>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</i> can only be completed in a situation with the biological father, not a female partner.

## **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ITEMS ON THE VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

All items on the form are required and must be completed in the manner described below. It is important to remember that the information given on the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* must match the information provided on the birth certificate. Any area that is non-applicable such as a parent without an SS# or an unemployed father should be left blank on the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*.

## **NAMES OF PARTIES FRONT PAGE**

**Note:** *This information is automatically populated when the Pat Ack is printed from the system*

1. **Birth Certificate State File Number:** Enter the state file number listed on the birth certificate and the facility name. Do not enter the local file number.
2. **Name of Father:** Enter the father's full name. Including first, middle, and last name(s), and suffix, if any.
3. **Child's Date of Birth:** Date of birth must be the same as listed on the birth certificate. Note: Date of birth can be entered in either format; alphabetic or numeric format.
4. **Child's Place of Birth:** Enter the City and County in South Carolina where this birth occurred.
5. **Mother's Name Prior to First Marriage:** Enter the name of the mother prior to her first marriage.
6. **Name of Child:** Enter the child's name as the parents have mutually agreed upon.

## **MOTHER'S INFORMATION**

1. **Mother's Date of Birth:** Enter the mother's birth date using the MM/DD/YYYY.
2. **Mother's Place of Birth:** State or foreign country.
3. **The mother should be provided with a copy of the Rights and Responsibilities. The clerk should read the form or ensure that the mother has read and understands her rights and responsibilities as they relate to signing form.**
4. **Signature of Mother:** The mother must sign the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment **in the presence of a notary.** (Note: the *notary should examine identification prior* to the mother signing the acknowledgment. See page 29 regarding proper identification.)
5. **Residence Address of Mother:** The complete residence address of the mother is required.

## **FATHER'S INFORMATION**

1. **Father's Date of Birth:** Enter the father's birth date using MM/DD/YYYY.
2. **Father's Place of Birth:** State or foreign country.
3. **Father's Social Security Number:** This item is required; If the father does not have a social security number, leave space blank.
4. **Father's Race:** If other is selected, you must state actual identified race

5. **Name of Father's Employer:** Enter the name of the father's employer. If the father is unemployed, leave space blank.
6. **Employer's Address:** Enter the address of the father's employer. If the father is unemployed, leave space blank
7. The **father should be provided with a copy of the Rights and Responsibilities.** The clerk should read the form or ensure that the father has read and understands the rights and responsibilities as they related to signing form.
8. **Signature of Father:** The father must sign the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* **in the presence of a notary and witness if not the same individual.** (Note: the notary should examine identification prior to the father's signing the acknowledgment).
9. **Residence Address of Father:** The complete residence address of the father is required.

### **CERTIFICATION THAT THE PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT WAS COMPLETED VOLUNTARILY**

A witness is needed to acknowledge that neither of the people completing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* was forced to complete the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* under duress or coercion. They must sign and date the form in the space provided. **The witness may be the same person who notarizes the form, however if the notary and witness are different individuals, the witness date and notary date of the father must be the same.**

### **NOTARIZING THE VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

1. **Notary for the Mother's Signature:** The Notary section **must be completed for each parent** even in cases where the signatures are provided at the same time. The notary is attesting to the validity of the individual signatures. The notary must also enter the date on which he/she signs the form and their commission expiration date.
2. **Identification Presented by Mother:** The notary must enter the ID information.
3. **Notary for the Father's Signature:** The Notary section **must be completed for each parent** even in cases where the signatures are provided at the same time. The notary is attesting to the validity of the individual signatures. The notary must also enter the date on which he/she signs the form and their commission expiration date.
4. **Identification Presented by Father:** The notary must enter the ID information.

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## **PROPER IDENTIFICATION FOR PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

In order for their signatures to be notarized, they need to present proper identification.

- 1. South Carolina Notary Law 26-3-40 subsection (2) states that the notary needs: ". . . satisfactory evidence that the person acknowledging was the person described in and who executed the instrument."**
- 2. DHEC's (Vital Statistics) website states, "A valid/current government, school or employer issued photo identification document of applicant is required before a search of the records will be conducted."**
- 3. It's the notary responsibility to determine if the parents IDs are valid and acceptable. If proper identification cannot be provided, the father's information will not go on the birth certificate and the parents must contact their local Vital Statistics Office on how to proceed.**
- 4. SCPOP and DHEC Vital Statistics strongly encourage all hospitals to use the ID Checking Guidebooks available in US/Canada and International editions. The books are available for purchase online at <http://www.idcheckingguide.com>**

## **THE BACK PAGE OF THE VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

### **PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT PRIOR TO THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD**

*This section will be used primarily for fathers who are in the military and will be stationed elsewhere and cannot be there for the birth of their child. **Please note that all the information on the front of this form concerning the father must also be completed at the time this section is completed.***

- Father's Name: First, Middle, Surname.
- Mother's Name: First, Middle, Maiden Name.
- **Expected Date of Birth of the Child:** Enter the child's expected birth date using the MM, DD, and YYYY.
- **Child's Surname:** Enter the surname the parents choose for the child.
- **Signature of the Father:** First, Middle, and Surname.
- **Certification** That the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment Was Completed Voluntarily:

A witness is needed to acknowledge that the father completing the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment was not forced to complete the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment under duress or coercion. They must sign and date the form in the space provided.

- **Notary for the Father's signature:** The Notary fills out their section and includes their commission expiration date.
- *Note: The witness and notary can be one and the same persons. However, if they are different individuals, the witness and notary date must be the same.*

### **RESCINDING A VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

***Rescission of a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment can be done by either parent within 60 days at the Vital Statistics State Office in Columbia.*** A rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. Therefore, the father's name WILL NOT be removed from the birth certificate. In order to have the father's name removed or to change the child's surname, a certified copy of a court order directing Vital Statistics to amend the birth certificate is required.

## GUIDELINES TO ASSIST WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW COMPLIANCE

- Give the brochure "***Make a Positive Choice for your Child***" (SCPOP Form 27155) to every unmarried mother. This brochure meets federal requirements to provide written notice regarding the legal consequences of signing the form, the rights and responsibilities that arise from acknowledging paternity, and the alternatives to signing the form.
- Show the SCPOP paternity video which can be easily accessed by QR code on the brochure. This video meets federal requirements to provide oral notice regarding the legal consequences of signing the form, the rights and responsibilities that arise from acknowledging paternity, and the alternatives to signing the form.
- Assist both parents to ensure they understand the legal rights and responsibilities and provide them with a copy of the form.
- Make sure that all staff responsible for paternity acknowledgment are also Notary Publics. Have trained staff who are notaries available on nights and weekends to assist parents with completing the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment prior to discharge from hospital.
- Submitted signed and notarized *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* at the time of filing the birth certificate electronically to the Vital Statistics State Office within the allowable 5-day period.
- Provide the SCPOP toll free telephone number **866-914-8786** for additional assistance or to find out about genetic testing offered by DSS/CSSD.
- Informational flyers can also be given to parents in pre-admission packets (SCPOP forms 27155 or 27158), in prenatal classes, given by volunteer services, or by any means available to the hospital for distribution of information to unmarried parents or expecting unmarried parents. Posters can also be posted in birthing areas or given to OBGYN offices to help with educating parents about the paternity establishment process prior to the birth of their child.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- Ensure the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is complete correctly. DHEC will reject the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* if the form has incorrect or missing information. This is one reason for lower paternity acknowledgment numbers.
- It is a federal and state law that ***all unmarried parents*** receive information on the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* process at the time of the child's birth and have the opportunity to acknowledge paternity before leaving the hospital.
- When both parents are available at the hospital, they are more likely to sign the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, please ensure parents are informed of this process and have opportunity to complete a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* prior to discharge.
- Parents can complete the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* *separately* in the hospital within five days of birth, provided their signatures are notarized separately, with the father's signature being witnessed on the same day he signed the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*.

## SECTION 5

### SPECIAL SITUATIONS

#### LEGAL ADVICE

Do not provide legal advice. Legal advice means counseling and/or advising an individual about his or her obligations under the law. The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form and the brochure contain information about establishing paternity and the rights and responsibilities of parents. If parents ask you legal questions, instruct them to read the forms or other information. If the written information does not answer the parents' questions, and their questions are legal in nature, do not attempt to answer them; direct the parents to seek legal counsel or DSS/CSSD for assistance.

Examples of questions requesting legal advice include:

- Should I fill out this form if I am an undocumented immigrant?
- How will filling out this form affect the custody of my child?
- Will I be able to participate in public assistance programs if I do not name the father of my child?

#### GENETIC TESTING

If parents are unsure about paternity, or if they have questions about obtaining genetic testing, you can give them information about local companies who perform genetic testing and/or you can give them the SCPOP toll-free helpline number 1-866-914-8786. Please provide parents with the fact sheet detailing the process (SCPOP form 27163). South Carolina CSSD provides genetic testing at no cost to either parent.



#### REMEMBER:

It is very difficult to disestablish paternity in South Carolina after the 60-day rescission period has passed.

#### DISESTABLISHING PATERNITY

In South Carolina, the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is considered a "legal document" once it is notarized. Even if the birth clerk has not yet filed it with the Vital Statistics State Office, it is considered a "legal document." Either parent has 60 days after signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* to change his or her mind. If a parent (or parents) wishes to rescind the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, the parent must go to the Vital Statistics State Office to complete the paperwork. However, a rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. It **WILL NOT** remove the man's name as the child's legal father on the birth certificate. To have the

father's name removed or to change the child's surname, a certified copy of a court order directing Vital Statistics to amend the birth certificate is required. Upon the expiration of the 60-day rescission period, **"a verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity may be challenged in court only on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact, with the burden of proof upon the challenger."** It is very difficult to disestablish paternity in South Carolina after the 60- day rescission period has passed.

## ACCESS TO PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is not a public record, so parents must verify accuracy prior to signing. Completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* are not available to parents, or the general public once received by the Vital Statistics State Office.

## SAFETY

If a woman fears for her safety because of violence or potential violence from the father or another individual, or otherwise does not want to voluntarily acknowledge paternity, she does not have to name the child's father. It is important to remember that this is a voluntary program and that mothers should never be pressured into establishing paternity.

## ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION AND OTHER FERTILITY ISSUES

Cases involving artificial insemination, surrogate parentage, donor sperm or egg, or other fertility issues present complex legal issues. In accordance with Regulation 61-19, Section 500G, the woman who gives birth to the child shall be recorded as the birth mother and the information required by the report of live birth shall be that of the birth mother. Thereafter, a court of competent jurisdiction may determine that a woman other than the live birth mother is the biological or genetic mother and order that the original live birth record be so amended. The original live birth record shall then be placed under seal. Birth certificate personnel should contact the Vital Statistics State Office for guidance if uncertain when completing the birth certificate.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE VOLUNTARY PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT AFTER IT IS COMPLETED

### HOSPITAL'S ROLE

The hospital staff must submit the signed and notarized *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement* for processing at the time of filing the birth certificate.

## REGIONAL VITAL STATISTICS OFFICES' ROLE

After a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is properly completed at the Regional Office it is transmitted to the Vital Statistics State Office for processing.

## VITAL STATISTICS STATE OFFICE'S ROLE

The Vital Statistics State Office is responsible for processing and filing of all *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments*. All questions regarding the processing of *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgments* should be directed to the Vital Statistics State Office at 803-898-3630.

## SOUTH CAROLINA PARENTING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM'S ROLE

The SCPOP office receives monthly statistics for each hospital, and for the state, from the Vital Statistics Office and uses the statistics to track the federal performance measure. When deemed necessary, SCPOP staff will contact hospital staff to draft a performance improvement plan when the hospital's percentage of *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is below the state average. SCPOP staff are there to assist you in identifying and resolving the reasons for the decline in your hospital's paternity percentage performance and offer solutions to increase the percentage.

## HOW PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS USED

The purpose of the paternity acknowledgment process is to establish paternity. If the parents are not married to each other, completing a *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* is the only way to establish paternity legally without pursuing a paternity order through the court.

The birth certificate with the father's information on it will be used as a form of identification for many purposes, which include:

- **Identification.** The birth record can be used for identification purposes at day care, school, summer camp, etc.
- **Visitation and/or custody.** Signing the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* allows the father to ask the court for a visitation order or a change in custody arrangements.
- **Health insurance.** A father's employer may need a copy of the birth record to substantiate the child's eligibility for health insurance.



### REMEMBER:

When there is a decline in your hospital's paternity acknowledgment percentage, SCPOP staff are there to help get the percentage back on track.

- **Other financial benefits.** The federal government may need the birth record to verify the child's eligibility for benefits. This might include military allotments, social security, veteran's benefits, and inheritance purposes.
- **Child support.** If one parent is seeking child support, a completed *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* will be presumed by law to have established paternity.
- **Adoption.** A father can use the birth certificate to prove a right to be involved in any adoption decisions involving the child.

## SECTION 6

### PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Note:** Federal and State laws require that every unmarried couple giving birth be provided their Rights and Responsibilities for acknowledging paternity at the hospital.

#### PURPOSE

The *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment*, when completed properly, establishes the father and child relationship when the father is not married to the child's mother. It creates certain legal rights and responsibilities for the mother, father, and child. By signing this document, the parents are establishing the right of the child to certain benefits, including:

- ◆ Two parents with whom the child can establish an emotional relationship.
- ◆ Two parents who share a legal duty to financially support the child.
- ◆ Two parents whose names will appear on the child's birth certificate.
- ◆ It will be easier for the child to access both parents' medical histories.
- ◆ It will be easier for the child to benefit from any health insurance, social security, or inheritance from the father.

#### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. I understand that I am not required to sign the Paternity Acknowledgment.
2. I understand that I should not sign the Paternity Acknowledgment unless I am confident that I am the biological father of the child.
3. I understand that I have the right to a genetic test to prove that I am the father of the child.
4. I understand that I have the right to a court hearing on the issue of paternity.
5. I understand that I have the right to an attorney to represent me at my own expense.
6. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, it will be presumed by law that I am the father of the child and the child's birth certificate will be issued/amended to reflect this fact. I understand that I may rescind my acknowledgment within sixty (60) days of the date of the signatures on the paternity acknowledgment form. Furthermore, I understand that if I decide to rescind, that rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. In order to have the father's name removed, a determination of paternity must be made by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative agency pursuant to SC Code Ann. Sections 63-17-10 and 63-17-40 which directs DHEC to amend the birth record. A certified copy of the order determining paternity and directing DHEC to amend the birth certificate must be provided to DHEC in order for any amendments to be processed. Any rescission made after sixty (60) days must be made in accordance with SC Code Ann. Section 63-17-50. I also by signing this document acknowledge that I have read or have

had read to me and understand my rights and responsibilities as outlined on the document provided to me.

7. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, my name will be entered on the birth certificate as the father of the child.
8. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I have the right to notice of an adoption proceeding.
9. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I am accepting the responsibility to provide child support and medical insurance until the child is eighteen (18) years of age, or beyond in some circumstances.
10. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I am attesting to the fact that I understand all of my rights and responsibilities, and that no pressure is or has been placed upon me to sign the Paternity Acknowledgment.

### **FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

The Paternity Acknowledgment, once signed in the presence of a notary public at the hospital, will be sent electronically to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Vital Statistics 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina, 29201. If both parents do not sign a Paternity Acknowledgment before leaving the hospital or birthing facility, only the mother's and child's name will be entered on the certificate of birth. The Paternity Acknowledgment may be signed later, at which time the certificate of birth will be amended to enter the name of the father. The Paternity Acknowledgment may be executed at any Region Vital Statistics office or at the state Vital Statistics office of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Trained staff are available to explain your rights and responsibilities and to answer your questions.

DHEC 607 (12/2017) **THIS IS THE MOST RECENT UPDATE**

## SECTION 7

### HOSPITAL STAFF BEST PRACTICES FOR PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

SCPOP strives to ensure the very best for all of South Carolina's children! The role you play in helping unmarried parents establish paternity is vital to this effort. Below we have listed "Best Practices" to help you in establishing paternity. We understand that hospital size, location, and other variables may impact the feasibility of these practices. We encourage you to modify them, as needed.

1. Distribute SCPOP materials to other hospital departments that work with expecting mothers. Examples of these are: prenatal classes, pre-admission packets, Lamaze, volunteer services, prenatal 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 unmarried patients have the SCPOP brochure before you visit with them.
3. Consider changing or expanding availability of hospital staff to accommodate working fathers by providing an opportunity to fill out the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* on nights and weekends. Train nurses and volunteers to complete the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* during evening and weekend hours when birth registration staff are off duty.
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 that is easily accessible by QR code on all materials. Parents can watch the video on their smart phones at their convenience. If you'd like a DVD copy to have added to the hospital education channel (if you have one), contact SCPOP at 1-866-914-8786.
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 (a laptop on a rolling cart that you can take into a patient's room) rather than having to go back to your office to complete the form. This will

save you a lot of time.

7. Put the link to the SCPOP website, <https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/> on your hospital's Women's Services webpage.

1. If you are not located in the Women's Center, call the patient to set up an appointment and encourage parents to read or watch video from materials about paternity establishment that they have been provided.
2. 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.
3. Consider implementing a Must for Dads class where you show them the SCPOP video, provide our materials, answer questions, and provide other important information for dads.
4. 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.
5. Remind parents that if they do not fill out the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment* form at the hospital that they can complete the form at their Regional Vital Statistics Office or Vital Statistics State Office at any time (let them know that there is a \$27 fee). Also provide SCPOP materials to parents selecting not to complete a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement at the hospital for their options.
6. Have copies of DSS *Custodial Parent Application* for mothers and *Non-Custodial Parent Application* for fathers available in case parents would like to pursue genetic testing. This information is also available on the DSS/CSS website. ([dss.sc.gov](http://dss.sc.gov))
7. Notify the SCPOP office concerning personnel changes in your office and the need for training new or additional staff. Have new staff completed the SCPOP training module within 30 days of hire.

# South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program



*Making a world of difference for children  
What a difference a Dad makes!*

## TRAINING MANUAL APPENDICES

#### PURPOSE

This Paternity Acknowledgment Affidavit, when completed properly, establishes the father and child relationship when the father is not married to the child's mother. It creates certain legal rights and responsibilities for the mother, father and child. By signing this document, the parents are establishing the right of the child to certain benefits including:

- ◆ Two parents with whom the child can establish an emotional relationship.
- ◆ Two parents who share a legal duty to financially support the child.
- ◆ Two parents whose names will appear on the child's birth certificate.
- ◆ It will be easier for the child to access both parents' medical histories.
- ◆ It will be easier for the child to benefit from any health insurance, social security, or inheritance from the father.

#### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. I understand that I am not required to sign the Paternity Acknowledgment.
2. I understand that I should not sign the Paternity Acknowledgment unless I am confident that I am the biological father of the child.
3. I understand that I have the right to a genetic test to prove that I am the father of the child.
4. I understand that I have the right to a court hearing on the issue of paternity.
5. I understand that I have the right to an attorney to represent me at my own expense.
6. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, it will be presumed by law that I am the father of the child and the child's birth certificate will be issued/amended to reflect this fact. I understand that I may rescind my acknowledgment within sixty (60) days of the date of the signature on the paternity acknowledgment form. Furthermore, I understand that if I decide to rescind, that rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. In order to have the father's name removed, a determination of paternity must be made by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative agency pursuant to SC Code Ann. Sections 63-17-10 and 63-17-40 which directs DHEC to amend the birth record. A certified copy of the order determining paternity and directing DHEC to amend the birth certificate must be provided to DHEC in order for any amendments to be processed. Any rescission made after sixty (60) days must be made in accordance with SC Code Ann. Section 63-17-50. I also by signing this document acknowledge that I have read or have had read to me and understand my rights and responsibilities as outlined on the document provided to me.
7. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, my name will be entered on the birth certificate as the father of the child.
8. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I have the right to notice of an adoption proceeding.
9. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I am accepting the responsibility to provide child support and medical insurance until the child is eighteen (18) years of age, or beyond in some circumstances.
10. I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, I am attesting to the fact that I understand all of my rights and responsibilities, and that no pressure is or has been placed upon me to sign the Paternity Acknowledgment.

#### FILING INSTRUCTIONS

The Paternity Acknowledgment, once signed in the presence of a notary public at the hospital, will be forwarded to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Vital Records, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina, 29201. If both parents do not sign a Paternity Acknowledgment before leaving the hospital or birthing facility, only the mother's and child's name will be entered on the certificate of birth. The Paternity Acknowledgment may be signed at a later date, at which time the certificate of birth will be amended to enter the name of the father. The Paternity Acknowledgment may be executed at any Region Vital Records office or at the state Vital Records office of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Trained staff are available to explain your rights and responsibilities and to answer your questions.

DHEC 607 (12/2017)

	<b>Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment</b>	Certificate No. _____
Pursuant to Section 44-63-165 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, I hereby affirm that _____ (first) _____ (middle) _____ (last) _____ (suffix) is the father of the child born on _____ (month) _____ (day) _____ (year), in _____ (city, county), South Carolina, to _____ (mother's full name prior to first marriage). It is desired to have the father's name entered on the birth certificate and that the child be named _____ (first) _____ (middle) _____ (last) _____ (suffix).		
Mother's Date of Birth: _____ (month) _____ (day) _____ (year)      Father's Date of Birth: _____ (month) _____ (day) _____ (year) Mother's Place of Birth: _____ (state or foreign country)      Father's Place of Birth: _____ (state or foreign country) Father's Social Security #: _____ Father's Race: _____ Father's Employer: _____ Employer's Address: _____		
I understand that by signing the Paternity Acknowledgment, it will be presumed by law that I am the father of the child and the child's birth certificate will be amended to reflect this fact. I understand that I may rescind my acknowledgment within sixty (60) days of the date of the signature on the paternity acknowledgment form. Furthermore, I understand that if I decide to rescind, that rescission will not cause or allow an amendment to the birth certificate. In order to have the father's name removed, a determination of paternity must be made by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative agency pursuant to SC Code Ann. Sections 63-17-10 and 63-17-40 which directs DHEC to amend the birth certificate. A certified copy of the order determining paternity and directing DHEC to amend the birth certificate must be provided to DHEC in order for any amendments to be processed. Any rescission made after sixty (60) days must be made in accordance with SC Code Ann. Section 63-17-50. I also understand that by signing this document that I have read or have had read to me and I understand my rights and responsibilities as outlined on the document provided to me.		
(Signature of Mother) _____ (Signature of Father) _____ (Address of Mother) _____ (Address of Father) _____		
I certify that prior to signing this Paternity Acknowledgment, the provisions of the Acknowledgment were discussed with the person acknowledging paternity and that based upon this discussion, it is my opinion that this Acknowledgment is being given voluntarily and was not obtained under duress or through coercion.		
Witness _____ Date _____ SWORN to and subscribed to before me this _____ day of _____, _____ (SEAL)      SWORN to and subscribed to before me this _____ day of _____, _____ (SEAL) (Signature of Notary Public) _____ (Signature of Notary Public) _____ For State of _____ For State of _____ My Commission expires: _____ My Commission expires: _____ Identification presented by mother: _____ Identification presented by father: _____ (Source) _____ (Number) _____ (Source) _____ (Number) _____		
Require photo identification of both parents when obtaining signatures and enter source and document number. Both parents must consent to adding the name of the father and agree upon the full name of the child.		
DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE		
ABSTRACT OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE (For Vital Records Use Only)		
Other Items To Be Corrected		
Item Omitted or In Error	Birth Certificate Shows	Should Be
1.		
2.		
3.		
Name of Document Supporting Correction of Item in the Corresponding Number Above	Place Where Document is Filed	Date Document was Filed
1.		
2.		
3.		
Information Stated in Document of Corresponding Number Above		
1.		
2.		
3.		
I certify that I have examined the documents referred to above, and they show no changes or erasures and appear to be authentic.	Evidence Reviewed by: _____	Date _____
DHEC 607 (12/2017)		

TO BE COMPLETED WHEN FATHER ACKNOWLEDGES PATERNITY PRIOR TO THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD (All information concerning the father on the front of this form including his notarized signature must also be completed at the time the affidavit below is executed.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, having acknowledged paternity prior to  
(first, middle, surname of father)

the birth of the child to be born to \_\_\_\_\_ on  
(first, middle, maiden name of mother)

or about \_\_\_\_\_, do consent for the child's surname  
(expected date of birth)

to be \_\_\_\_\_, further that the designation of the child's given name at the  
time of birth be considered as mutually agreed upon by me and the mother.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Father)

I certify that prior to signing this Paternity Acknowledgment, the provisions of the Acknowledgment were discussed with the person acknowledging paternity and that based upon this discussion, it is my opinion that this Acknowledgment is being given voluntarily and was not obtained under duress or through coercion.

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

SWORN to and subscribed to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary Public) (SEAL)

For State of \_\_\_\_\_ My Commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

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TO BE COMPLETED IF SIGNATORY **RESCINDS** PATERNITY WITHIN SIXTY (60) DAYS OF A SIGNED PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT AFFIDAVIT.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (Father/Mother) having previously acknowledged  
(Name of person rescinding) (circle one)

paternity of \_\_\_\_\_ born on  
(Name of child)

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(Child's date of birth) (Full maiden name of mother)

do now hereby rescind my voluntary acknowledgment which was signed and notarized on \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date of paternity acknowledgement)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of rescinder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of rescinder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date rescission signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date rescission signed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Identification presented by rescinder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Identification presented by rescinder)

SWORN to and subscribed to me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

(SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Notary Public)

State of South Carolina  
My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Photo identification is required when obtaining signature(s). The source and identifying number must be recorded to validate revocation. Consent from second (2nd) signatory is NOT REQUIRED.

DHEC 607 (12/2017)

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## **OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL LAW REGARDING PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND IN-HOSPITAL PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROGRAMS**

(Code of Federal Regulations) (Title 45, Volume 2) Revised as of January 1, 2008  
From the U.S. Government Printing via GPO Access

### **SECTION 302.70. REQUIRED STATE LAWS**

(iii) Procedures for a simple civil process for voluntarily acknowledging paternity under which the State must provide that, before a mother and putative father can sign a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity, the mother and the putative father must be given notice, orally or through video or audio equipment, and in writing, of the alternatives to, the legal consequences of, and the rights (including any rights, if a parent is a minor, due to minority status) and responsibilities of acknowledging paternity, and ensure that due process safeguards are afforded. Such procedures must include:

(A) A hospital-based program in accordance with Sec. 303.5(g) for the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity during the period immediately before or after the birth of a child to an unmarried mother and a requirement that all public and private birthing hospitals participate in the hospital-based program defined in Sec. 303.5(g)(2); and

(B) A process for voluntary acknowledgment of paternity in hospitals, State birth record agencies, and in other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program; and

(C) A requirement that the procedures governing hospital-based programs and State birth record agencies must also apply to other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program, including the use of the same notice provisions, the same materials, the same evaluation methods, and the same training for the personnel of these other entities providing voluntary paternity establishment services.

(iv) Procedures under which the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity creates a rebuttable or, at the option of the State, conclusive presumption of paternity, and under which such voluntary acknowledgment is admissible as evidence of paternity; In SC, the acknowledgment creates conclusive evidence of paternity after the 60-day rescission period].

### **SECTION 303.5. ESTABLISHMENT OF PATERNITY.**

(g) Voluntary paternity establishment programs.

(1) The State must establish, in cooperation with hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program, a program for voluntary paternity establishment services.

(i) The hospital-based portion of the voluntary paternity establishment services program must be operational in all private and public birthing hospitals statewide

(ii) and must provide voluntary paternity establishment services focusing on the period immediately before and after the birth of a child born out-of-wedlock.

(iii) The voluntary paternity establishment services program must also be available at the State birth record agencies, and at other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program. These entities may include the following types of entities:

(A) Public health clinics (including Supplementary Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinics), and private health care providers (including obstetricians, gynecologists, pediatricians, and midwives);

(B) Agencies providing assistance or services under Title IV-A of the Act, agencies providing food stamp eligibility service, and agencies providing child support enforcement (**IV-D**) services;

(C) Head Start and child care agencies (including child care information and referral providers), and individual child care providers;

(D) Community Action Agencies and Community Action Programs;

(E) Secondary education schools (particularly those that have parenthood education curricula);

(F) Legal Aid agencies, and private attorneys; and

(G) Any similar public or private health, welfare or social services organization.

(2) The hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program must, at a minimum:

(i) Provide to both the mother and alleged father:

(A) Written materials about paternity establishment,

- (B) The forms necessary to voluntarily acknowledge paternity,
  - (C) Notice orally or through video or audio equipment, and in writing, of the alternatives to, the legal consequences of, and the rights (including any rights, if a parent is a minor, due to minority status) and responsibilities or acknowledging paternity, and
  - (D) The opportunity to speak with staff, either by telephone or in person, who are trained to clarify information and answer questions about paternity establishment;
- (ii) Provide the mother and alleged father the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity;
  - (iii) Afford due process safeguards; and
  - (iv) File signed original of voluntary acknowledgments or adjudications of paternity with the State registry of birth records (or a copy if the signed original is filed with another designated entity) for comparison with information in the State case registry.
- (3) The hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program need not provide services specified in paragraph (g)(2) of this section in cases where the mother or alleged father is a minor or a legal action is already pending, if the provision of such services is precluded by State law [this Section does not apply to SC as our law does not preclude voluntary paternity acknowledgment services to minors].
- (4) The State must require that a voluntary acknowledgment be signed by both parents, and that the parents' signatures be authenticated by a notary or witness (witnesses).
- (5) The State must provide to all hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program:
- (i) Written materials about paternity establishment,
  - (ii) Form necessary to voluntarily acknowledge paternity, and
  - (iii) Copies of a written description of the alternatives to, the legal consequences of, and the rights (including any rights, if a parent is a minor, due to minority status) and responsibilities of acknowledging paternity.
- (6) The State must provide training, guidance, and written instructions regarding voluntary acknowledgment of paternity, as necessary to operate the voluntary

paternity establishment services in the hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program.

(7) The State must assess each hospital, State birth record agency, local birth record agency designated by the State, and other entity participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program that are providing voluntary paternity establishment services on at least an annual basis.

(8) Hospitals, State birth record agencies, and other entities designated by the State and participating in the State's voluntary paternity establishment program must forward completed voluntary acknowledgments or copies to the entity designated by the State. If any entity other than the State registry of birth records is designated by the State, a copy must be filed with the State registry of birth records, in accordance with Sec.303.5(g)(2)(iv). Under State procedures, the designated entity must be responsible for promptly recording identifying information about the acknowledgments with a state-wide database, and the IV- D agency must have timely access to whatever identifying information and documentation it needs to determine in accordance with Sec.303.5(h)if an acknowledgment has been recorded and to seek a support order on the basis of a recorded acknowledgment in accordance with Sec.303.4(f).

(h) In IV-D cases needing paternity establishment, the IV-D agency must determine if identifying information about a voluntary acknowledgment has been recorded in the statewide database in accordance with Sec.303.5(9)(8).

[40 FR 27164, June 26, 1975, as amended at 50 FR 19650, May 9, 1985; 54 FR 32310, Aug. 4, 1989; 56 FR 22354, May 15, 1991;  
59 FR 66250, Dec. 23, 1994; 64 FR 6249, Feb. 9, 1999; 64 FR 11809, Mar. 10, 1999]

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## **OVERVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA LAW & REGULATIONS REGARDING PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND IN-HOSPITAL PATERNITY ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, TITLE 44, CHAPTER 7**

#### **SECTION 44-7-77. PROGRAM TO OBTAIN VOLUNTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY OF NEWBORNS.**

The Department of Health and Environmental Control and the State Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the South Carolina Hospital Association, shall develop and implement a program to promote obtaining voluntary acknowledgments of paternity as soon after birth as possible and where possible before the release of the newborn from the hospital. A voluntary acknowledgment including those obtained through an in-hospital program shall contain the requirements of Section 63-17-60(A)(4) and the social security number or the alien Identification number assigned to a resident alien who does not have a social security number, of both parents, and must be signed by both parents. The signatures must be notarized. As part of its in-hospital voluntary acknowledgment of paternity program, a birthing hospital as part of the birth registration process, shall collect, whereas certain able, information which is or may be necessary for the establishment of the paternity of the child and for the establishment of child support. The information to be collected on the father or on the putative father if paternity has not been established includes, but is not limited to, the name of the father, his date of birth, home address, social security number, or the alien identification number assigned to a resident alien who does not have a social security number, and employer's name, and additionally for the putative father, the names and addresses of the putative father's parents.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, TITLE 44, CHAPTER 63**

#### **SECTION 44-63-163. BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO BE PREPARED AFTER FATHER IS DETERMINED IN PATERNITY PROCEEDING.**

A certificate must be prepared for a child born in this State to reflect the name of the father determined by the court or an administrative agency of competent jurisdiction upon receipt of a certified copy of a court or administrative determination of paternity pursuant to Section 63-17-10. If the surname of the child is not decreed by the court, the request for the certificate must specify the surname to be placed on the certificate. When an amended certificate is prepared, the original certificate and certified copy of the court order must be placed in a sealed file not to be subject to inspection except by order of the family court.

#### **SECTION 44-63-165. BIRTH CERTIFICATE OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILD TO BE PREPARED WHEN FATHER ACKNOWLEDGES PATERNITY.**

A certificate must be prepared for a child born out of wedlock in this State to include the name of the father upon receipt of a sworn acknowledgment of paternity signed by both parents to include the surname by which the child is to be known. However, if the reputed father or the mother is deceased, if another man is shown as the father of the child on

the original birth certificate or if the original birth certificate states that the mother was married, a new certificate may be prepared only when paternity has been determined or acknowledged pursuant to Article 1, Chapter 17, Title 63. A paternity acknowledgment must be provided to the State Department of Social Services from the appropriate state agency upon request at no charge for the purpose of establishing a child support obligation and otherwise a paternity acknowledgment is not subject to inspection except upon order of the Family Court.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, TITLE 63, CHAPTER 17**

#### **SECTION 63-17-50. VERIFIED VOLUNTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**

(A) A verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity creates a legal finding of paternity, subject to the right of any signatory to rescind the acknowledgment within the earlier of:

- (1) sixty days; or
- (2) the date of an administrative or judicial proceeding relating to the child including a proceeding to establish a support order in which the signatory is a party

(B) Upon the expiration of the sixty-day period provided for in subsection (A), a verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity may be challenged in court only on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact, with the burden of proof upon the challenger.

(C) In the event of a challenge, legal responsibilities including child support obligations of any signatory arising from the acknowledgment may not be suspended during the challenge except for good cause shown.

(D) Judicial or administrative proceedings are not required or permitted to ratify an unchallenged acknowledgment of paternity

#### **SECTION 63-17-60. ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE.**

(A) The following evidence is admissible at a hearing to determine paternity:

- (4) A verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity. This acknowledgment creates a rebuttable presumption of the putative father's paternity except that a verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity executed after January 1, 1998, creates a conclusive presumption of the putative father's paternity subject to the provisions of Section 63-17-50. The person acknowledging paternity must be given the opportunity to seek legal advice prior to signing a verified voluntary acknowledgment. A verified voluntary acknowledgment must be made by a sworn document, signed by the person acknowledging paternity and witnessed by (1) that person's attorney, parent, or guardian or (2) a person eighteen year of age or older who is not related to the child and not employed or acting under the authority of the Department of Social Services. The witness must attach to the acknowledgment a written

certification which specifies that prior to signing the acknowledgment, the provisions of the acknowledgment were discussed with the person acknowledging paternity and that, based upon this discussion, it is the witness' opinion that the acknowledgment is being given voluntarily and that it is not being obtained under duress or through coercion.

**SECTION 63-17-330. TEMPORARY ORDER FOR SUPPORT PENDING PATERNITY.**

The court shall issue, upon motion of either party, a temporary order requiring the payment of child support pending an administrative or judicial determination of parentage if:

- (1) The defendant has signed a verified voluntary acknowledgment of paternity which complies with the requirements of Section 63-17-60(A)(4);
- (2) the defendant has been determined pursuant to law to be the parent;  
or
- (3) there is other clear and convincing evidence that the defendant is the child's parent.

**SECTION 63-5-30. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PARENTS REGARDING MINOR CHILDREN.**

The mother and father are the joint natural guardians of their minor children and are equally charged with the welfare and education of their minor children and the care and management of the estates of their minor children; and the mother and father have equal power, rights, and duties, and neither parent has any right paramount to the right of the other concerning the custody of the minor or the control of the services or the earnings of the minor or any other matter affecting the minor. Each parent, whether the custodial or noncustodial parent of the child, has equal access and the same right to obtain all educational records and medical records of their minor children and the right to participate in their children's school activities unless prohibited by order of the court. Neither parent shall forcibly take a child from the guardianship of the parent legally entitled to custody of the child.

**SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 61, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL  
SECTION 61-19, Section 500 VITAL STATISTICS LIVE BIRTH REGISTRATION**

(H) Parentage should be determined as follows:

- (1) If the mother was married either at time of conception or birth, or anytime between conception and birth, the name of the husband shall be entered on the certificate as the father of the child.
- (2) If the mother was not married either at the time of either conception or live birth or between conception and live birth, the name of the father shall

not be entered on the report without an acknowledgment of paternity as prescribed by State law and signed by the mother and the person to be named as the father. The acknowledgment shall be filed with the State Registrar.

(3) If the father is not named on the report of live birth, non-identifiable information about the father may not be entered on the report.

(4) Thereafter, paternity of a child may be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to South Carolina law. The name of the father and surname of the child shall be entered on the report of live birth in accordance with the finding of the court when a valid court order is submitted to the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The original live birth record shall then be placed under seal.

The birth mother of the child shall verify the accuracy of the personal data to be entered on the report to permit the submission of the report within the five calendar days as prescribed in Section 501A.

(1) If the mother is incapacitated or deceased, the legal father or other informant as determined appropriate by the State Registrar shall provide and verify the accuracy of the information.

(2) If the mother or other informant does not verify the accuracy of the personal data entered within the prescribed five days, the report of live birth shall be filed without verification.

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## BECOMING A NOTARY PUBLIC

Research shows that the best time for parents to acknowledge paternity is at the hospital during their stay for the birth of their child, and the presence of an on-site Notary Public is crucial to the successful implementation of the paternity acknowledgment process.

If an on-site notary is not available, many parents who wish to acknowledge paternity at the hospital simply will not be able to establish a legal father for their child. If a notary is not available to give instructions and offer the *Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form* for the parents to complete, it is very likely the parents will not make the effort to do so later. Many times, parents find themselves overwhelmed with caring for their newborn child; many times, unforeseen problems occur (for example, they may be confused when trying to fill out the form later, or they may not know the location of the nearest Vital Statistics Office, or they may not have transportation to get to the Vital Statistics Office, or the father may have changed his mind or simply disappeared. As a result, paternity will not be established for many children, even though the father has expressed an interest in establishing a legal relationship with his child at the hospital.

Since the availability of a Notary Public can mean the difference between success and failure in establishing paternity, all hospital staff members who assist parents with the paternity acknowledgment form should apply to become notaries. It is always advisable to have more than one Notary Public on staff to ensure there is adequate coverage on different shifts, and in case of vacation, sick leave, or staff turnover. If you aren't already a notary, you should ask your supervisor if the hospital will cover the cost of your becoming one.

## BECOMING A NOTARY PUBLIC IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for the commissioning of Notaries Public for South Carolina. You can call (803) 734-2512 to receive an application to become a notary. Information on becoming a notary in South Carolina, including a downloadable application can also be found at <http://www.scsos.com/notariesbc.htm>.

## NOTARY PUBLIC APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Carefully **TYPE** or **PRINT LEGIBLY** all information requested on the top portion of your application and sign in the presence of a Notary Public. (*The bottom portion is to be completed by your county legislative delegation; addresses are listed at the end of the application.*)

- 2) Attach a check or money order to your original application in the amount of \$25.00 payable to "SC Secretary of State's Office."
- 3) Mail both pages of your original application and check to your county delegation office listed at the end of the application for the required signatures. Your delegation office will forward your check and application to the Secretary of State's office.
- 4) If your county delegation is not listed, forward your application to: South Carolina House of Representatives, PO Box 11867, Columbia SC 29211. The phone number is (803) 734-2010.
- 5) The Secretary of State's Office will mail your commission within one week upon receipt of a properly executed application.
- 6) You **must be a registered voter** to become a Notary Public. If you do not know your voter registration number, call your County Voter Registration and Election Commission for this information. The number will be listed under County Government in your local telephone book. You can also check your voter registration number at [www.scvotes.org](http://www.scvotes.org).
- 7) If you are renewing your commission and if your commission has not yet expired, you may file your application as a renewal. If your previous commission has expired, your application will be processed as a new application.

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## CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT DIVISION OFFICES

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Child Support Services Division, Central Inquiry Unit 3150  
Harden Street Columbia, SC 29202  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 1469, Columbia, SC 29202-1469  
Call Center: 1-800-768-5858

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Child Support Services Division, Midlands Regional Office  
Regional Director: Brenda Cummings (803-898-8589)  
[Brenda.Cummings@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Brenda.Cummings@dss.sc.gov)  
3150 Harden Street Columbia, SC 29202  
Mailing address: P. O. Box 1270, Columbia, SC 29202-1270  
Fax: (803) 898-9465

Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington,  
McCormick, Richland, Saluda, and York

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Child Support Services Division, Lowcountry Regional Office  
Regional Director: Mack Dungan (843-953-9732)  
[Mack.Dungan@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Mack.Dungan@dss.sc.gov)  
3346 Rivers Ave., Suite E, North Charleston, SC 29405  
Mailing address: P. O. Box 150012 Charleston, SC 29415-5012 Fax:(843)  
953-9155

Allendale, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, and Orangeburg

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Child Support Services Division, Pee Dee Regional Office  
Regional Director: Crystal Jenkins (843-413-6534)  
[Crystal.Jenkins@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Crystal.Jenkins@dss.sc.gov)  
2120 West Jody Rd. - Suite D, Florence, SC 29503 Mailing  
address: P. O. Box 1071 Florence, SC 29503-107  
Fax: (843) 413-6512 or (843) 413- 6513

Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro,  
Sumter, and Williamsburg

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Child Support Services Division, Upstate Regional Office  
Regional Director: Georgie Cornelius (864-282-4674)  
[Georgie.Cornelius@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Georgie.Cornelius@dss.sc.gov)  
714 North Pleasantburg Dr. - Suite 200, Greenville, SC 29607 Mailing  
address: P. O. Box 17799 Greenville, SC 29607-8799 Fax: (864) 282-  
4634

Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens,  
Spartanburg, and Union

## REGIONAL VITAL STATISTICS OFFICES

County	Address	City	Zip	Phone
Aiken	222 Beaufort St NE	Aiken	29801	803-642-1686
Anderson	220 McGee Road	Anderson	29625	864-260-5667
Beaufort	1407 King St	Beaufort	29902	843-525-7637
Charleston	4050 Bridge View Dr	North Charleston	29405	843-953-0032
Chesterfield	203 N Page St P O Box 112	Chesterfield	29709	843-623-3767
Florence	1705 W. Evans St	Florence	29501	843-413-6440
Georgetown	531 Lafayette Circle	Georgetown	29440	843-546-0174
Greenville	352 Halton Road	Greenville	29607	864-372-3267
Greenwood	1736 South Main St	Greenwood	29646	864-227-5970
Hampton	531 West Carolina Ave PO Box 37	Varnville	29944	803-943-3878
Horry	1931 Industrial Pk. Rd.	Conway	29526	843-915-8802
Orangeburg	1550 Carolina Ave	Orangeburg	29116	803-533-7236
Richland	2600 Bull St	Columbia	29201	803-898-3630
Spartanburg	151 E Wood St PO Box 4217	Spartanburg	29305	864-596-2227
Sumter	105 N Magnolia PO Box 1628	Sumter	29150	803-934-2845
York	1070 Heckle Blvd PO Box 302	Rock Hill	29731	803-909-7307

# SCPOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Following are copies of the SCPOP materials you will use to help unmarried parents understand why it is important to establish paternity.

- Form 27155 SCPOP Brochure—English Version
- Form 27156 SCPOP Brochure—Spanish Version
- Form 27162 SCPOP POSTER—English Version
- Form 27161 SCPOP POSTER—Spanish Version
- Form 27163 SCPOP GENETIC TESTING FACT SHEET
- Form 27158 PRENATAL EDUCATION CARD—English Version
- Form 27159 PRENATAL EDUCATION CARD—Spanish Version

## BENEFITS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

### **Paternity helps children**

- Have a relationship with both parents
- Know both families medical histories
- Achieve better social, emotional, and educational outcomes
- Lowers likelihood of high-risk behavior
- Have access to either parent's health insurance and/or benefits such as social security or inheritance
- Provides a complete identity by having their father's name on the birth certificate

### **Paternity helps mothers**

- Share the responsibility and rewards of parenthood
- Receive financial support to assist in raising the child
- Access to expanded paternal family for additional support

### **Paternity helps fathers**

- Gain legal rights to their child
- Be recognized as the father by having his name on the birth certificate
- Show commitment to their child
- Establish an emotional bond with the child and participate in the child's life



*Learn more about why paternity is important to your child. Snap the QR Code to watch an informative video.*

*Toll-free*

**(866) 914-8786**

**Email: [scpop@dss.sc.gov](mailto:scpop@dss.sc.gov)**

<https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/>

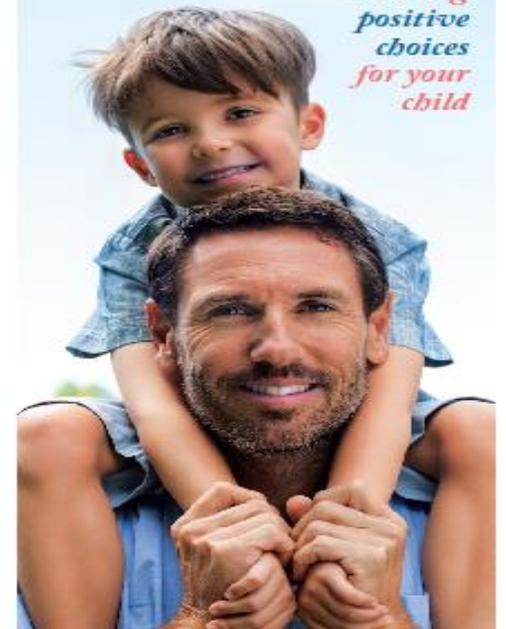
**DSS**  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

COMPETENCE • COURAGE • COMPASSION

FORM 27155 SCPOP Brochure (FEB 18)

## South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program

*Making  
positive  
choices  
for your  
child*



**DSS**  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

COMPETENCE • COURAGE • COMPASSION



## BENEFICIOS DE ESTABLECER LA PATERNIDAD

### La paternidad ayuda al menor a

- Tener una relación con ambos progenitores.
- Conocer la historia médica de ambas familias
- Alcanzar mejores resultados a nivel social, emocional y educativo
- Disminuir la probabilidad de comportamiento de alto riesgo
- Tener acceso a, bien sea, al seguro médico del progenitor y/o a beneficios tales como seguro social o herencia
- Tener una identidad completa, al tener el nombre de su padre en el certificado de nacimiento

### La paternidad ayuda a las madre

- Compartir la responsabilidad y las recompensas de la paternidad
- Recibir apoyo financiero para ayudar en la crianza del menor
- Acceso a la familia extendida del lado paterno para apoyo adicional

### La paternidad ayuda a los padres a

- Obtener derechos legales sobre el menor
- Ser reconocido como el padre, al tener su nombre en el acta de nacimiento
- Mostrar su compromiso con el menor
- Establecer un enlace emocional con el menor y participar en su vida



*Aprenda por qué la paternidad es importante para su hijo. Capture el código QR para ver un video informativo*

Llame sin cargos al  
**(866) 914-8786**

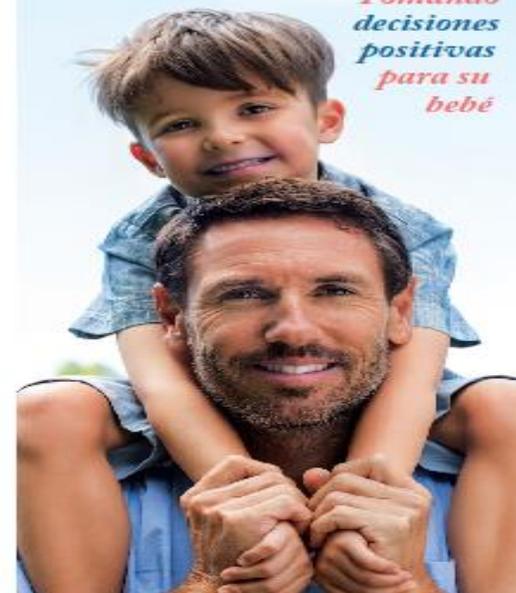
Email: [scpop@dss.sc.gov](mailto:scpop@dss.sc.gov)  
<https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/>

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SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

COMPETENCE • COURAGE • COMPASSION  
FORM 27156 SCPOP Brochure SPA (FEB 18)

## Carolina del Sur Programa de Oportunidad de Paternidad

*Tomando  
decisiones  
positivas  
para su  
bebé*



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COMPETENCE • COURAGE • COMPASSION

*Making positive  
choices for your child*

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## **South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program**

Program for  
Unmarried Parents  
to Establish Paternity

*Toll-free*

**(866) 914-8786**

[www.dss.sc.gov](http://www.dss.sc.gov)

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*Learn more about why paternity  
is important to your child.  
Snap the QR Code to watch  
an informative video.*



FORM 27162 SCPOP POSTER ENG





*Tomando decisiones  
positivas para su bebé*

**Programa de  
Oportunidades  
de Crianza  
de  
Carolina del Sur**

Programa para que  
Padres no casados  
Establezcan la  
Paternidad

*Llame sin Cargos al*

**(866) 914-8786**

[www.dss.sc.gov](http://www.dss.sc.gov)

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*Aprenda más de la importancia  
que tiene la paternidad para sus  
hijos. Capture el código QR para  
ver un video informativo.*



FORM 27161 POSTER SWING SPA



*Making positive choices for your child*

## South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program

Program for Unmarried Parents to Establish Paternity

### Paternity Establishment through Genetic Testing

If you are not sure who the biological father is, you should not sign the Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment at the hospital!

The Child Support Service Division (CSSD) of the Department of Social Services offers genetic testing for either the mother or potential father at no cost.

#### How does genetic testing work?

Genetic testing is a quick and painless way to establish paternity. CSSD uses the buccal swab method where a genetic sample is collected by swabbing the inner facial cheek. The samples are collected by a trained technician.

#### How long will it take to get the results of my genetic testing?

Generally, it takes three to four weeks to complete the paternity test once the last necessary party is tested. The parties will receive copies of the test results.

#### What is the cost for genetic testing?

CSSD offers a no cost, court-admissible paternity test. To start the process either party submits an application to Child Support Service Division (CSSD).

#### What will happen when the genetic test results come back?

The State of South Carolina requires a finding of 95% or higher to establish a rebuttable presumption of paternity. Upon receipt of a genetic test result of 95% or higher, CSSD will set the case for an administrative child support hearing to establish paternity and, if the custodian requested, child support. If the result is returned at 0.00%, CSSD would close the case.

**For more information about establishing paternity, please call 866-914-8786 or email [scpop@dss.sc.gov](mailto:scpop@dss.sc.gov).**

-This test is for parents that have not established paternity and are uncertain of the biological father. If the father is listed on the birth certificate and wanting to dis-establish paternity, please seek legal counsel. This testing is only offered to parents seeking to establish paternity.

**Visit DSS website for more information or application**

**<https://dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/>**

IMPORTANT: Establishing a father through the above DNA process does not automatically create an order for Child Support. The custodial parent of the child would have to request child support services to establish a support order.



*Learn more about why paternity is important to your child. Snap the QR Code to watch an informative video.*



FORM 27163 SCPOP GENETIC TESTING FACT SHEET

