



# Paternity Matters



A Bi-annual Publication of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services

First Issue of 2011

## Greetings from Catherine Sachs, San Francisco Department of Child Support Services Paternity Program Coordinator



The San Francisco Department of Child Support Services (“SF-DCSS”) is pleased to present the first issue of “Paternity Matters,” a bi-annual publication designed to keep you up-to-date and informed about California’s Paternity Opportunity Program (“POP”) and its San Francisco counterpart, the SF-DCSS Paternity Program.

Did you know that the POP Declaration establishes a legal parental relationship between a father and his child? This document allows unmarried parents to give their children the same rights and privileges as a child born of married parents. Establishing paternity by the signing of a Paternity Declaration protects the child’s rights to many benefits, including social security benefits; pension or veterans benefits; medical and life insurance, if available; inheritance protection; access to important family medical records; and the emotional benefit of knowing the identity of both parents.

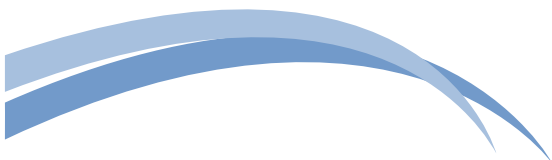
The success of the SF-DCSS Paternity Program and the California Paternity Opportunity Program is dependent on the work performed by all of you! Please join me as we work together to help San Francisco children and their families.

### In This Issue

- Greetings P.1
- Paternity Forum P.2
- POP DVD’s P.3
- FAQ’s P.3
- Paternity Program Reaches Out P.4
- Supplies P.4
- Increase Your Compliance P.4
- Statistics P.4

### Did You Know....?

- ◆ In California, unmarried fathers do not have legal rights or legal responsibilities concerning their children until legal paternity has been established.
- ◆ Military Service members can sign a Paternity Declaration before the child is born.
- ◆ A parent can rescind the Paternity Declaration within 60 days of signing it.
- ◆ You can Establish Paternity for Children:
  - Even if father is incarcerated.
  - When father lives in another state.
  - When father lives in another country.
  - When one or both parents are minors.



# Paternity Forum: Beyond Biology—A Resounding Success

During what one participant described as “the best paternity and fatherhood conference I’ve ever been to,” child support professionals, hospital birth clerks, and public service employees convened on June 8, 2011 in San Francisco, to attend the conference, Paternity Forum: Beyond Biology. Sponsored by the Bay Area Local Child Support Agencies, the Child Support Directors Association of California, and the California Department of Child Support Services, the conference came together after months of planning. The first conference of its kind in San Francisco, the Paternity Forum: Beyond Biology was held at the War Memorial Veterans Building. There were nearly 200 attendees, including child support professionals, representatives of nonprofits, hospital birth clerks, public defender staff, district attorney staff, Human Services Agency staff, and many more.

San Francisco Department of Child Support Services Director Karen M. Roye opened the conference with a warm welcome to all invitees. John Kersey, Regional Program Manager of the Office of Child Support Enforcement led the opening plenary with his presentation, “Fatherhood Matters.” Kersey



Karen M. Roye, Director of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services, opened the Forum with her welcome speech.



Participants attended various workshops, such as this one on California’s Paternity Opportunity Program.



Catherine Sachs, SF-DCSS Paternity Program Coordinator, gave a presentation on her county’s program.



was followed by Michael Hayes, Deputy for Family Initiatives in the Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General. Mr. Hayes described his presentation as the “anti-Povich” (as in Maury Povich, sensationalist talk show host who capitalizes on paternity drama) approach to paternity establishment. Hayes was a vibrant and entertaining speaker. Following these presentations, an array of workshops were held, including Cross Cultural Fatherhood Issues, California’s Paternity Opportunity Program, Dads and Divorce: How to Co-Parent and Why It Matters, Man Up: Helping Teen Fathers Grow Into the Parents They Want to Be, The San Mateo County Fatherhood Collaborative: A Case Study on Community Engagement in Fatherhood Services, and DNA—The Truth is in There. The closing plenary was presented by Dr. George Maha, JD, Ph.D., MT (ASCP), Associate Vice President



and Laboratory Director/Technical Leader of Laboratory Corporation of America, DNA Identification Testing Division. Maha’s presentation covered unusual scenarios and the fascinating legality of the world of paternity.

Paternity Forum: Beyond Biology was an all-around success. Thanks to all those who attended and helped make it a great event!

## POP DVD’S

POP DVD’s are available for all hospitals and clinics to show to unmarried expectant parents. The DVD explains the process and important benefits of signing the POP declaration. If you would like a DVD, please contact Catherine Sachs at (415) 356-2754. The DVD can also be viewed by going to [www.sfgov.org/dcss](http://www.sfgov.org/dcss), and clicking on the “Establish Paternity” link, then the “POP Video” link.

## Frequently Asked Questions by Hospitals

**Q** What if both parents want to sign the Paternity Declaration but father cannot get

to the hospital?

**A** Assist the mother with completing her portion of the Paternity Declaration and witness her signature. Leave space on the declaration for a second witness’s signature. 2) Advise mother she

can take the original, signed Paternity Declaration to the father. Have her explain that the father can sign his section of the Declaration of Paternity and have it witnessed by a Notary Public. 4) Have parents mail the original, signed and witnessed Declaration to the State POP office. Credit will be given to the hospital witnessing mother’s signature as long as mother’s witness and the witness’s address belong to the hospital.

**Q** Can a POP Declaration be completed and signed by the father if he is married to somebody else?

**A** Yes. The father can be married to someone else, sign the POP declaration, and put his name on the birth certificate. If the mother is married to someone else, the POP declaration cannot be signed as there is a legal presumption that her current husband is the father of the child.

**Q** If the parents sign the POP declaration after leaving the hospital and then want to amend the birth certificate, do they have to pay a fee?

**A** There is no fee for signing and filing a POP declaration at any time. There is a fee (currently \$20) payable to the Office of Vital Records, for amending the birth certificate. This fee includes the issuance of a new certificate.



## Paternity Program Reaches Out to Expectant Parents

Earlier this year, staff from the SF-DCSS Paternity Program began a new initiative to educate expectant parents by performing presentations to prenatal classes. In March, Paternity Program Coordinator Catherine Sachs began giving presentations at San Francisco General Hospital and at the Homeless Prenatal Program. During her presentations, Ms. Sachs gives attendees an overview of the Paternity Declaration and answers specific questions. Ms. Sachs also gives presentations to prenatal-education staff, nurse-midwives, and anyone else involved with expectant parents. Do you or your staff need POP-related training? We are here to help you. Contact the San Francisco Program Coordinator, Catherine Sachs, at (415) 356-2754 or at [catherine.sachs@sfgov.org](mailto:catherine.sachs@sfgov.org).

## Need Supplies?

Does your hospital or agency need more paternity pamphlets for your patients or clients? Contact the San Francisco Program Coordinator, Catherine Sachs, at (415) 356-2754 or at [catherine.sachs@sfgov.org](mailto:catherine.sachs@sfgov.org).

## How to Increase Your Hospital's Compliance Rate

Unwed, expectant parents who are well-informed prior to giving birth make better determinations to establish paternity for a child. To further improve your hospital's program by increasing the number of Paternity Declarations completed by unmarried parents, we offer a number of suggestions, including:

Help Promote the POP Program: Ensure your program has adequate supplies of POP-related literature. Contact the Program Coordinator when supplies are low.

Conduct Parent/Patient Follow Up: For parents who take the form with them to be completed later, follow up with them after they leave the hospital to ensure completed

paternity documents are received.

Tracking Log: Maintain a tracking log to keep track of the reasons parents do not want to complete a Paternity Declaration. This will help you and us in determining what barriers exist to establishing paternity. Understanding these barriers can help us tailor our education to specifically address these barriers, and in turn, help your hospital increase its percentage of completed declarations.



**SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD  
SUPPORT SERVICES**  
Director Karen M. Roye

Main Office:  
617 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
[www.sfgov.org/dcsc](http://www.sfgov.org/dcsc)

## POP Statistics

The State of California keeps track of how many births occur to unwed parents in each hospital in the state. From that data, the State determines what percentage of those parents completed a POP declaration in each hospital. Below are the statistics for 2010 showing the completion rates for San Francisco hospitals.

- California Pacific Medical Center: 74%
- Kaiser Hospital 86%
- San Francisco General Hospital 78%
- St. Luke's Hospital: 82%
- UC San Francisco: 74%

This newsletter is intended for individuals and birthing staff who are involved with the California Paternity Opportunity Program or who work with expectant parents. We welcome article submissions and feedback. Please contact: San Francisco DCSS Paternity Coordinator Catherine Sachs  
Telephone: 415.356.2754  
Email: [catherine.sachs@sfgov.org](mailto:catherine.sachs@sfgov.org)