



## Virginia Recognizes Top Ten Hospitals for Stellar Paternity Establishment Rates

**Richmond, VA (August 22, 2023)** - The [Virginia Department of Social Services](#) (VDSS) in conjunction with the [Virginia Paternity Establishment Program](#) (VPEP) has announced the top ten Virginia hospitals recognized for excellent performances in paternity establishment rates for 2022. These hospitals, located throughout the Commonwealth, continue to set a high standard by recording paternity establishment rates greater than the Commonwealth's average of 77 percent and exceeding the projected state-mandated goal of more than 80 percent for the year.

The VDSS Division of [Child Support Enforcement](#) sponsors VPEP, which is operated by [Veritas-HHS](#). VPEP is a program which offers unmarried parents the opportunity to establish paternity of newborn children by voluntarily acknowledging fatherhood during their hospital stay. VPEP also supports paternity establishment should unmarried parents decide later that they would like to add the father to the birth certificate. The Commonwealth has a total of 53 birthing hospitals that serve parents statewide by promoting paternity establishment through the VPEP.

“The benefits of establishing paternity are vast and vary from increasing a child’s self-esteem to establishing a more complete health history,” said Yesenia Peiker, VPEP project manager. “It is imperative that we continually advocate for paternity establishment on behalf of the children. A child, who has an established bond with his or her father, has greater access to emotional support and social and economic opportunities.”

The hospital with the highest paternity establishment rate in 2022 of 84.34 percent is Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia.

“I feel proud that through my work I can help the children of Virginia grow up with a sense of identity that lets them know they are part of a family,” said Marion Turner, lead birth registrar at Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital.

The Commonwealth’s 77 percent average establishment rate reflects a 1 percent increase from 2021. This upward trend is another notable achievement for the Commonwealth.

### Top Ten Virginia Hospitals by Paternity Establishment Rate

Hospital	Paternity Establishment Rate
Sentara Martha Jefferson	84.34%
Inova Fair Oaks	83.58%
Sentara RMH	83.16%
Inova Loudon	82.53%
Winchester Medical Center	82.19%
St. Francis Hospital	81.92%
Johnston Willis	81.83%
Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center	81.80%
Ballad Health Johnston Memorial	81.43%
Stone Springs Hospital	81.11%

For more information on the benefits of establishing paternity or to start the process in Virginia, visit the [Virginia Department of Social Services](#). To find out more information about the Virginia Paternity Establishment Program, please visit [www.vapaternity.com](http://www.vapaternity.com) or contact Yesenia Peiker at (732) 749-0581.

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#### About the Virginia Department of Social Services

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), one of the Commonwealth's largest government agencies, is comprised of approximately 2,000 state staff who proudly serve alongside more than 10,000 employees of 120 local departments of social services and community action agencies to deliver critical social services to Virginia's most vulnerable citizens. VDSS is committed to ensuring Virginians have access to the high-quality human services and resources needed to enhance their individual and collective well-being, and shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities. The agency provides a wide range of services and resources in the areas of food and energy assistance, foster care and adoption, child support, and abuse and neglect prevention, among others. For more information, visit [dss.virginia.gov](http://dss.virginia.gov).