



POP Perspectives

A publication of the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)

Spring 2006

A MESSAGE FROM...

Elise Wing, Federal Office of Child Support

One of the performance indicators that the Federal government uses to measure the success of States' Child Support Enforcement programs is paternity establishment. The State of California has been a top performer in this area, consistently achieving a paternity establishment rate of over 100 percent in the last three years. California's superior performance has been largely due to the success of its Paternity Opportunity Program. This program helps children who are born out of wedlock obtain the same level of support that children born of a marriage receive.

From following this program over the years, I have noted that the level of success achieved in the California Paternity Opportunity Program has been a real team effort.

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Mr. POP's Farewell

Saying goodbye can be very difficult, especially to valued colleagues and cherished friends. On June 1, 2006, I will be retiring from the State after 38 years of service. For the past 13 years, it has been my pleasure to help coordinate the Paternity Opportunity Program. At the time that first POP declaration was signed at General Hospital in Eureka in 1993, none of us knew the impact this program would have.

I wish to thank all of you who have worked on POP and have made it such a tremendous success. Through all of our efforts, more than a million children and their parents have been helped. I am sure we are all proud of what we have accomplished.

I especially wish to thank all the hospital birth clerks, medical records staff and nurses who have been the key to the remarkable achievements of this program. Those of you on the front lines have done so much, yet seldom have received the credit and recognition you deserve. Thank You!

I want to thank my friends at the Office of Vital Records for the professional and personal partnership we have forged. Your generosity in supporting POP and me personally by allowing the POP team to participate in the OVR workshops and annual conferences is greatly appreciated.

Last and certainly not least, I want to thank and express my appreciation to my POP co-workers here at DCSS. Your hard work, dedication and friendship over the years has made this assignment the best of my career. I will miss you!

Wishing you all the best,

Jim Mullany, aka "Mr. POP"



See the POP Newsletter Online
at
www.childsup.ca.gov

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Margara Monico has been the Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) Coordinator for Orange County since 2002. She really enjoys working with hospital staff, parents, and state POP staff. "The best part of being the POP Coordinator is working with such dedicated and committed staff".

Margara believes that a key aspect to the success of POP in Orange County has been the continued and open communication with hospital staff and the State Department of Child Support Services.

Margara is enthusiastic and determined! She takes her role seriously as POP Coordinator and continues to be committed to ensuring the Orange County Paternity Opportunity Program is successful. Margara frequently receives requests from other counties for assistance regarding the Paternity Opportunity Program. She is always available to assist others with the same energy she commits to her tasks in Orange County.

On a personal note, Margara and her husband, Angel, have two children. Margara enjoys volunteering in school activities and being involved with her children's school lives.



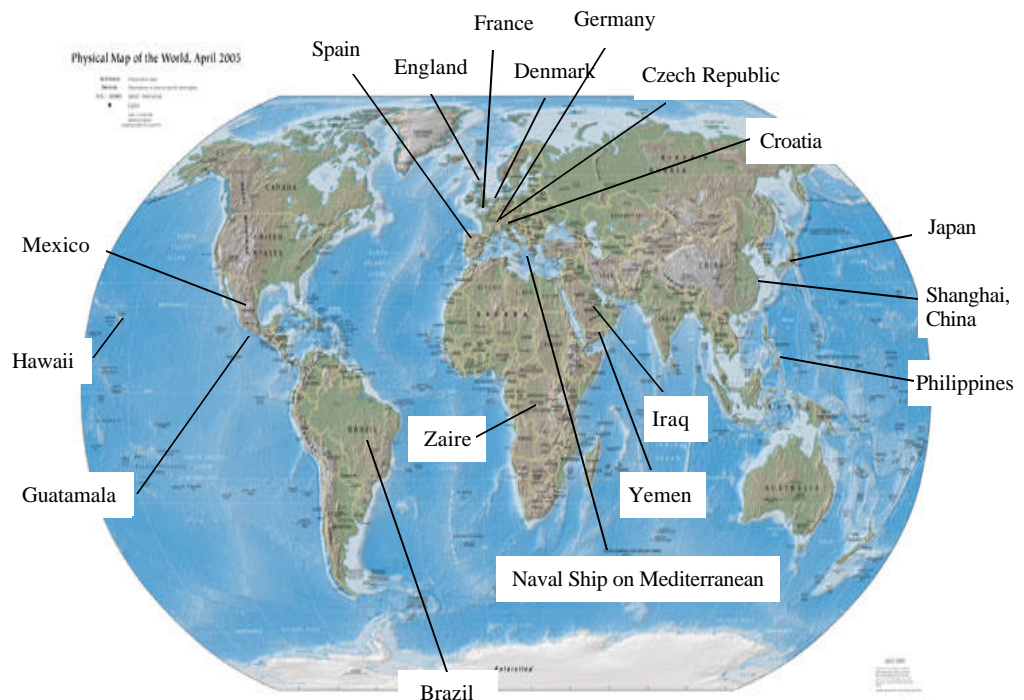
POP CIRCLES THE GLOBE

Those of us involved in the Paternity Opportunity Program realize the program helps children and their parents throughout California. At the state level, it has become apparent, POP is a program that has global implications. From e-mails received around the world asking about the program, to parents wanting to complete POP forms when one parent is in a foreign country, to needing POP forms to get passports for children, POP helps people all around the world.

A familiar scenario to the POP Unit is one in which a POP form is needed because the father is being deployed. The POP form plays a significant role in ensuring the child will receive health and benefit coverage while the father is overseas. To qualify for military benefits (when the father is not married to the mother) the parent must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and a paternity declaration or a court order of paternity as proof of the father child relationship. The military requirements have led to POP forms being signed on naval ships in the Mediterranean and in combat zones.

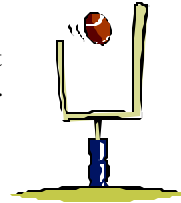
The impact of California POP has helped people in Mexico, Germany, Brazil, the Philippines, Spain, Japan and several African nations. In one situation a POP form was signed by a father who was a citizen of Japan and the mother who was a California resident. When the father died suddenly, his extensive estate became contested and involved the legal systems of both Japan and California. One of the key elements of the case became a POP form he had completed which established the paternity of the child.

So next time you're completing a paternity form, stop and look at it carefully... your hands could be touching the next POP that eventually goes to Kazakhstan.



POP Goal for 2006

What color to paint the room? What name should we choose? How many diapers should we buy? These are just a few of the thousands of questions that run through a new parent's head during the months prior to their child being born. Many programs are available to parents to help answer these questions and the more important questions on how to best provide for their child.



The Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) has been available to over a million parents to help establish legal paternity when their child is born. Hospital staff have been the principal participants by being there not only during delivery, but to answer questions and help parents complete their POP form. With all the excitement and chaos of a new birth, some parents may not get to ask all the questions they would like to right before signing the form.

Taking that into consideration, one of the State POP Team's goals for 2006 is to make information available to parents about POP during the prenatal process. We have created a new flyer (see insert) that lets parents know that a birth certificate does not establish legal paternity. Although a birth certificate can be used to establish the identity of the person named on it, for unmarried parents, the Declaration of Paternity or a court order is the legal documentation of who a child's father is.

Adding this flyer to prenatal class literature is where the POP Team hopes to start the flow of POP information to unmarried parents. This would give them ample time to ask questions and be fully informed by the time the baby is delivered.



A second benefit to early informing, is unmarried military men who will not be present at their child's birth due to military orders of deployment, can take advantage of state policy that allows only them to sign a Declaration of Paternity early. They could sign their portion of the form in front of an authorized witness or notary public, attach their military orders and give the form to the mother to hold until the child is born. She would then complete her and the child's portion, sign in front of the hospital witness and the dad's name could be added to the birth certificate at that time.

The state POP Team is including this form in their training and workshop sessions and has received a positive response from staff at hospitals, Planned Parenthood and the Regional Perinatal Programs of California.

For more information on getting POP to parents during the pre-natal process, contact the State POP Team at 1-866-249-0773 or ASKPOP@dcss.ca.gov

POP Team Changes

Sad as we are to be losing Mr. POP and all his wisdom, the POP Team must carry on the goals of the Paternity Opportunity Program (Retired Mr. POP wouldn't have it any other way).

That said, veteran POP Team members Wanda Abney and Elena Palmi are making room for a new member of the POP Team, Marta Rivas-Glaze. Marta's high qualifications and sincere passion for the program made her the top candidate for the job. She is committed to helping the parents and children of California and is excited to be working in the POP program. Marta is a welcomed addition who's bi-lingual skills will open the door of the POP Program even wider to unmarried Spanish speaking parents throughout California.

Along with the addition of the new POP Team member, there will be some changes in county assignments effective June 1, 2006.



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FOCUS ON HOSPITALS

Sutter Amador Hospital, in the rolling foothills of Northern California, gets a gold star for teamwork and attention to detail.

POP is a team effort between Diane Collins (the Health Information Clerk) and the nursing staff, lead by OB Director Robin Fanbuena. Like a well oiled machine, the two areas of the hospital come together to fully implement the POP program.

First, the OB nurses present information on the program to unmarried parents. They require both parents watch the state video and read the blue cover sheet to be certain they understand their rights and responsibilities. Any questions are addressed and the form is completed and witnessed. Next Diane comes in and processes the paternity declaration. She reviews the form for completeness and accuracy, then submits the original to the state and processes the copies for the \$10 payment by the county.

It's textbook application of the paternity process done so well it looks easy to the outsider. But we know, it's the hard working staff that really makes the program work.



MESSAGE , *Continued*

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It starts with the hospital birthing staff who are responsible for over 90 percent of the voluntary paternities obtained in California. It continues with the county and State *vital records offices* that help coordinate the paternities with the birth registration process. And culminates with the local and State offices of child support services that ensure that the paternities established are used to help children obtain support and benefits.

On behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Regional Office in San Francisco and ACF's Office of Child Support Enforcement, I wish to commend all of you who help to improve the lives of these children for your efforts. Keep up the good work!

Elise Wing
ACF, Region IX



POP WARM & FUZZIES

In a world where problems can take center stage, a simple "thank you" for doing your job is so very much appreciated. Here are just a few words of gratitude received by satisfied POP customers as well as POP program providers.



"Thank you for your prompt response to my request. Your answer was the one piece of the puzzle we were missing. You helped us avoid a very long weekend of legal research and writing." - San Diego County Public Defenders' Office

"Thank you again for your help with this. I appreciate your time and effort!" - Dad from Pennsylvania trying to add his name to his daughter's birth certificate

"I want to thank you for all of your help, all of your support, and most important your friendship; It was a real pleasure working with both of you"-
Outgoing POP Coordinator from Santa Clara County

"It's been a pleasure to have been Del Norte's coordinator and great to work with you." - Outgoing POP Coordinator from Del Norte County

"Thank you very much for your prompt response to my request. Have a great weekend and thank you for your excellent and efficient customer services." - Satisfied POP Customer



Changes, *Continued from Page 3*



The new breakdown of counties is as follows:

Wanda Abney
Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, Ventura

Elena Palmi
Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne

Marta Rivas -Glaze
Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, San Bernardino, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Yolo, Yuba

Did you know...
in 2005, the state POP Team personally answered 676 e-mails that came directly through the ASKPOP e-mail address?

Askpop@dcss.ca.gov

Your State POP Team
Wanda Abney (916) 464-5811
Wanda.abney@dcss.ca.gov
Elena Palmi (916) 464-5801
Elena.palmi@dcss.ca.gov
Marta Rivas-Glaze (916) 464-5802
Marta.rivas-glaze@dcss.ca.gov

Department of Child Support Services
P.O. Box 419064
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064
FAX (916) 464-5898

State of California
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
Department of Child Support Services
Greta Wallace, Director