



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY BEST PRACTICES

1. Have detailed policies and procedures in place on the Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) process.
2. Involve the management team with the birth certificate staff to ensure your facility is in compliance with the law.
  - Evaluate staff performance related to the AOP process
  - Complete and review the Hospital AOP Report that is to be submitted to the Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) staff
  - Review the Hospital Paternity Acknowledgments Quarterly Report
  - Foster internal communication among the birth registrar, the nursing and case management staff
  - Participate in POP monitoring visits
3. Providing optimal customer service to the parents and having a successful AOP program should include:
  - Birth registration in the area of the mother/child unit
  - Easy access to Texas Electronic Registrar (TER) on the floor
  - Laptop and printer for the birth registrar
  - Cell phone or pager for birth registrar
  - Copier and fax readily available
  - Birth Registrar should have access to outside e-mail for updates and communication from the POP staff
4. Allocate sufficient time for staff to complete the AOP process as required by law. Good communication is very important. Often, staff must deal not only with language barriers but differing education levels as well.
5. Use the Parent Survey whenever an AOP is indicated. The AOP and Parent Survey should be readily accessible for the entire retention period.
6. Utilize documents and hand-outs provided in mandatory annual training sessions by the POP staff. Refer to current AOP training packet. Updated material may be found at: <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/hospitals/index.shtml>
7. Have weekend and after-hours coverage by certified staff. If this is not possible, make certain the parents are provided with the name and contact information of the Birth Registrar. Blank or incomplete AOPs cannot be given to anyone. **Prompt follow-up for after hours and weekend births is necessary to ensure parents receive AOP information required by law.**
8. Offer information about the AOP to parents before the birth. Include AOP information (Form 1608):
  - In pre-registration packets
  - At prenatal clinics
  - In doctors' offices
  - At birthing classes
  - During admitting