



# Matters of Record

## News from the Center for Health Statistics concerning the Oregon Birth Certificate

Summer 2010

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**Read More - archived articles:**

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/regnewsletters.shtml#offtherecord>

### Paternity establishment in Oregon - update

Paternity continues to be an important issue in Oregon. There are many benefits to the child, parents, and community when both parents are legally established.

In support of this, the Center for Health Statistics (CHS) and the Division of Child Support (DCS) visited almost every hospital in the state during the first half of the year. The recent webinar hosted by the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) had 106 participants, including many birth clerks. Thank you for attending. Your work is making a difference for families and Oregon, and we thank you.

As you have seen in previous issues, Oregon has seen a decline in the number of paternity acknowledgements signed in recent years. For births to unmarried women occurring in 2009, Oregon had a paternity establishment percentage of 84.0%. The federal requirement is at least 90%. If Oregon does not improve this year, we risk losing a significant amount of Federal funding for certain Oregon public assistance programs. As of July 1, Oregon has a statewide hospital paternity establishment percentage of 72.2%. While this is only an improvement of .5 percent, 35 of 61 facilities improved their overall percentages. Meanwhile, our partners in DCS are doing their best to help fill the gap with a number of innovative outreach efforts. On June 26, they hosted local "Paternity Saturdays" resulting in nearly 100 individuals

visiting nearby DCS offices to have their questions about paternity answered and where appropriate, many were able to have paternity tests completed.

The table below provides an update on paternity acknowledgments by facility. Oregon needs facility acknowledgments to average above 80 percent of the current births to meet the federal requirement. The remaining number needed will come from administrative orders, notarized paternity acknowledgments, and court orders.

CHS has a limited set of paternity data tables available for facilities if desired. These tables show the age group, education level, country of birth, race and ethnicity for unmarried mothers who signed or did not sign a paternity acknowledgment at the hospital. If you would like this information for your facility, please contact Judy Shioishi at 971.673.1166 or Karen Hampton at 971.673.1191 to request the tables.

<b><u>Number of births to unmarried mothers by birth facility for 2010 year-to-date</u></b>						
County	Facility	Total Unwed Births	AOP signed at hospital		Second parent on record	
			Count	%	Count	%
<b>Statewide total</b>		7,783	5,620	72.2	5,676	72.9
Baker	St. Elizabeth Health Services, Inc.	24	15	62.5	15	65.2
Benton	Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center	127	92	72.4	94	74.0
Clackamas	Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center	224	163	72.8	159	71.0
	Legacy Meridian Park Hospital	103	74	71.8	72	69.9
	Providence Milwaukie Hospital	104	77	74.0	75	72.1
	Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center	149	108	72.5	109	73.2
Clatsop	Columbia Memorial Hospital	69	49	71.0	49	71.0
	Providence Seaside Hospital	24	13	54.2	12	50.0
Coos	Bay Area Hospital	138	97	70.3	95	68.8
	Coquille Valley Hospital	4	1	25.0	2	50.0
Curry	Curry General Hospital	16	14	87.5	15	93.8
Deschutes	Motherwise Community Birth Center	4	3	75.0	2	50.0
	St. Charles Medical Center - Bend	259	197	76.1	198	76.4
	St. Charles Medical Center - Redmond	57	46	80.7	44	77.2
Douglas	Mercy Medical Center, Inc.	199	145	72.9	142	71.4
Grant	Blue Mountain Hospital District	11	9	81.8	9	81.8
Harney	Harney District Hospital	10	7	70.0	6	60.0

		Total Unwed Births	AOP signed at hospital		Second parent on record	
			Count	%	Count	%
Hood River	Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital	61	47	77.0	51	83.6
Jackson	Ashland Community Hospital	50	35	70.0	35	70.0
	Providence Medford Medical Center	125	93	74.4	92	73.6
	Rogue Valley Medical Center	285	211	74.0	215	75.4
Jefferson	Mountain View Hospital District	50	39	78.0	38	76.0
Josephine	Three Rivers Community Hospital	177	118	66.7	120	67.8
Klamath	Sky Lakes Medical Center	181	135	74.6	137	75.7
Lake	Lake District Hospital	9	7	77.8	7	77.8
Lane	McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center	106	88	83.0	87	82.1
	Nurse Midwifery Birth Center	5	5	100.0	5	100.0
	Peace Harbor Hospital	12	6	50.0	6	50.0
	Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend	515	379	73.6	390	75.7
	Sacred Waters Birthing Center	3	3	100.0	3	100.0
Lincoln	Home Sweet Home Birth	2	2	100.0	2	100.0
	Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital	34	28	82.4	26	76.5
	Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital	65	52	80.0	50	76.9
Linn	MidValley Birthing Services	1	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Samaritan Albany General Hospital	140	100	71.4	106	75.7
	Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital	73	53	72.6	53	72.6
Malheur	Holy Rosary Medical Center	168	115	68.5	114	67.9
Marion	Salem Hospital	676	477	70.6	483	71.4
	Santiam Memorial Hospital	20	15	75.0	15	75.0
	Silverton Hospital	391	293	74.9	300	76.7
Multnomah	Adventist Medical Center	188	133	70.7	134	71.3
	Alma Midwifery Services	10	6	60.0	7	70.0
	Andaluz Waterbirth Center - Portland	9	8	88.9	7	77.8
	Legacy Emanuel Hospital & Health Center	347	220	63.4	227	65.4
	Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital and Med. Ctr	80	64	80.0	61	76.3
	Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center	207	147	71.0	149	72.0
	Natural Childbirth & Family Clinic	1	1	100.0	1	100.0
	OHSU Hospitals & Clinics	402	280	69.7	289	71.9
	Providence Portland Medical Center	390	263	67.4	271	69.5
Tillamook	Tillamook County General Hospital	30	19	63.3	19	63.3
Umatilla	Good Shepherd Medical Center	134	101	75.4	101	75.4
	St. Anthony Hospital	80	59	73.8	58	72.5
Union	Grande Ronde Hospital, Inc	55	43	78.2	41	74.5
Wallowa	Wallowa Memorial Hospital	7	5	71.4	5	71.4
Wasco	Mid-Columbia Medical Center	56	38	67.9	39	69.6
Washington	Andaluz Waterbirth Center - Tualatin	2	2	100.0	2	100.0
	Providence St. Vincent Medical Center	618	456	73.8	465	75.2
	Tuality Community Hospital	249	184	73.9	182	73.1
Yamhill	Bella Vie Gentle Birth Center	4	4	100.0	3	75.0
	Providence Newberg Medical Center	65	54	83.1	52	80.0
	Willamette Valley Medical Center	111	74	66.7	77	69.4

## No father present identified as a top barrier to establishing paternity

CHS recently surveyed birth certifiers asking about barriers to completing paternity acknowledgments at facilities. Eighty-five birth certifiers (representing **57** facilities) responded with a variety of information about timing, barriers to completing forms, and need for assistance. We want to share some of the information from the survey, as well as our suggestions for overcoming common barriers.

### **Barrier - Father not available**

There was one common message from 54 of the 85 birth certifiers – the father isn't always available when the hospital staff works with the mother on the birth certificate and paternity establishment. This presents a barrier because the form must be signed by both parents, with a witness signature for each, while the mother is still a patient.

Solution - Although a difficult barrier, we have the following suggestions for hospitals when working with unavailable fathers:

Start the process as early as possible. Include a sheet in the preadmission packet that explains that a paternity form will be needed for unmarried mothers. Include the Oregon prenatal guide produced by the Perinatal Health section of DHS which includes information explaining paternity law ([www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pnh/](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pnh/)). This will give the parents more time to plan for signing after the birth.

Is dad available 'after hours'? The witnessed form (45-31) can be signed at any time after the birth and witnessed by any hospital staff, as long as the mother is still a patient. If the father is available before the birth worksheet is completed, he can sign the form. Be careful to make sure that the name of the child and parents match between the paternity form and the birth certificate.

If the dad isn't currently local, give the mother a notary version of the form (45-21). The parents can complete this form outside of the hospital at any time and can get it notarized in another state, or military base outside of the country, if needed. There is a fee for filing the form after the birth is registered, but the Division of Child Support

**We have solutions....**



(DCS) might be able to provide assistance with the completion of the form, notary, and fee.

Several birth clerks mentioned that the father wasn't available because he was in jail. If dad is in jail, the notary version of the form can be used. The notary version of the form (45-21) can be signed while in jail. Notaries are available in these facilities. Division of Child Support staff may be able to help in these cases as well.

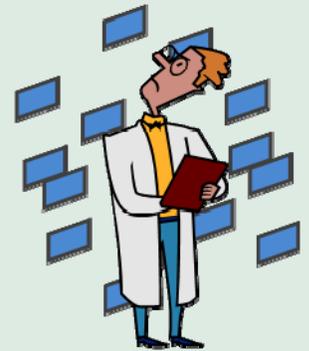
If the mother or father isn't sure about the identity of dad, they should not sign a paternity form. DCS has services, including paternity tests, for either parent when the mother is unmarried.

### **Barrier - Parents need information before the child's birth**

Solution - We agree that it is important for unmarried mothers to know that a paternity acknowledgment will be needed after the child's birth. Oregon Public Health Division has produced a handbook that has information new parents will need on paternity, birth certificates, car seats, breast-feeding, immunizations, and many other areas. The prenatal handbook is available at county health departments, prenatal care providers (doctors and midwives) and other locations. It is published in both English and Spanish.

### **Barrier - Window of opportunity is small**

Solution - Oregon law allows the witnessed form (45-31) to be used at facilities only while the mother is a patient in the facility (along with other restrictions). In the survey, most facilities reported only a one to two day stay for mothers. Once the mother is discharged, only a notarized form can be accepted. The solution is to provide the mother with a notary version of the form (45-21) for completion outside of the facility.

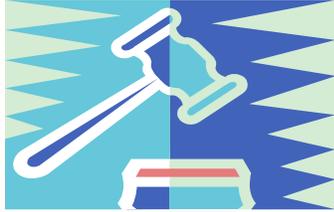


DCS has services for unmarried mothers and fathers that range from paternity tests to assistance completing the form and paying the amendment fee. Information is available on the web at <http://www.doj.state.or.us/dcs/index.shtml>. Printed pamphlets are also available for facilities to give parents. Contact Dale Slater at 503.986.6262 or [Dale.Slater@doj.state.or.us](mailto:Dale.Slater@doj.state.or.us) to request copies of the pamphlets.

We greatly appreciate the responses received to this survey. The information and suggestions provided help us understand the difficulties in establishing paternitys. We will continue to work on this issue with you.

## When is a Court Order Necessary to Establish Paternity?

This information is provided as background information only.



We do not expect hospital staff to answer questions about establishing paternity with court orders or to review other documents.

When a mother is married at any time between conception and birth (or 300 days prior to birth) to someone who is not the father, the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form cannot be completed. There is one exception: if the mother has a divorce decree stating that her ex-husband is not the father of the child, then a Voluntary Acknowledgment 45-21 Notarized Affidavit can be filed with a certified copy of the divorce decree. Parents who wish to file a Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity with a divorce decree should use the 45-21 Notarized Affidavit and be referred directly to the State Vital Records office for a review of the divorce decree.

When a divorce decree is not available and a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity cannot be filed, the only other option is to petition and obtain a court judgment disestablishing the husband as the father of the child. Only then can another man be established as the father of the child. Parents often need an attorney to help them with this process.

If the mother receives public assistance from the state and the father is not listed on the child's birth record, the Department of Human Services usually refers the case to the Division of Child Support (DCS). DCS will work to file administrative orders to establish paternity whenever possible. DCS may not pursue establishing paternity or a child support order if the mother is at risk of harm from the father of the child. Parents are welcome to call or visit the Division of Child Support to ask questions about what they should do to establish paternity through a court. Phone numbers and addresses of local offices are available on the Department of Justice/DCS web page at: <http://dcs.state.or.us/offices/default.htm>

## Mother's Marital Status and Paternity Signed

Over the last few months, it has come to our attention that there is some confusion with how to answer the question “Was Mother Married...”. So, we want to clarify how to answer this question and its accompanying question on paternity.

The full question on the EBRS birth certificate is “Was Mother Married at Conception, at Birth or Within 300 Days of Birth?” There are four optional answers = *Yes*, *No*, *Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership*, or *Unknown*. One of these options **must** be selected as an answer for this question.

In addition, the accompanying question on paternity must be answered from the drop-down-box. The “Paternity” question is “Has Acknowledgement of Paternity Been Signed in the Hospital?” The drop-down-box has three optional answers for the question = *Yes*, *No*, or *Not Applicable*.

*Not Applicable* is the default since most Oregon mothers are married at the time of the child's birth and no paternity acknowledgement is required. *Not Applicable* is an answer only if the answer to “Was Mother Married” is *Yes* or *Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership*. If the answer to “Mother Married...” is *No* then the “Paternity” question must be answered either *Yes* or *No*.

When the response to the “Paternity” question does not match the marital status of the mother, error message(s) are triggered in reports sent from our National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). In response, the Registration Unit staff at the State, must correct these errors and re-send the corrected records to NCHS. In order to correct these errors, we must contact you, our Birth Clerk-partners to learn from you the correct answer found in the mother's record.

We hope that by clarifying how to answer the question, we will alleviate additional work for you and for our staff.



## Mother's Phone Number

As stated in the spring edition of the Birth Newsletter, we added two fields to the electronic birth registration system (EBRS) for mother's phone numbers as of May 10, 2010. Since adding these fields, we have received several questions from birth clerks regarding their appropriate use. The questions are primarily centered on *who* can provide the number(s), whether it is necessary to complete both fields, and whether a cell phone number can be accepted.

Fathers, husbands, partners, or other family members can provide the phone number(s) if the mother agrees and if they live together and share the same phone(s). You may enter one phone number and leave the second blank. In addition, you can accept either cell phone or landline phone number(s). Often, people have only a cell phone number, so there is no problem with accepting it. Overall, any phone number approved by the mother is acceptable.

Remember - providing the phone number(s) is voluntary and the record can be registered without them, but please note we do *request* that you collect them. The phone numbers provide Public Health nurses with a way to contact mothers who may need help with their babies. In addition, phone numbers enable Public Health employees to contact mothers for public health studies.



As previously mentioned in our recent newsletter, the new birth worksheets include a space for the mother's phone number(s). The revised birth Parent Worksheets in English or Spanish, are located on the Registration website at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/instructions.shtml>

If you use a birth worksheet that is tailored to your hospital, please update it to include the mother's phone number fields. Revised birth certificate instructions are located at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/instructions.shtml>

## Nombre vs. Apellido—Spanish Names

The name appearing on the birth certificate becomes the legal name of the child and the record should show the legal name of the parents. In the past, there has sometimes been difficulty in capturing Spanish names, as they should appear. The new Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS) accepts longer names and a variety of special characters related to Spanish and other non-English names.

The Spanish version of the parents' section of the Birth Worksheet clarifies how names given to babies, as well as the legal names of their parents, should be entered on a birth certificate.

On the Birth Worksheet, "Otro Nombre" (literally, "other name") was replaced with "Segundo Nombre" for middle name and the last name labeled as "Primer Apellido" and "Segundo Apellido" to make it clear where to enter both (double) last names.



When you enter Spanish names into the EBRS, please be sure to enter names written in the spaces marked "Primer Apellido" and "Segundo Apellido" in the **Last Name field** only. There is room for 50 characters, so it should easily accommodate more than one last name. Avoid the common error of putting the "Primer Apellido" name in the middle name field.

For a copy of the latest Spanish parent worksheet dated 4/23/2010, please see: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/registration/instructions.shtml>

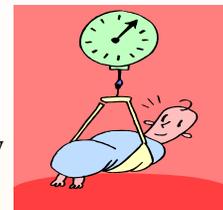
## Date of Last Menses

The prenatal page of the EBRS birth certificate asks a question about the *date of the mother's last menses*. In most cases, the date provided by the mother is within the expected range. However, if the date is greater than one year from the date of birth, it triggers an error message in reports sent from our National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The NCHS verification system asks us to confirm that it is not an error and that the mother's last menses was more than 3 months prior to pregnancy.

We know that contacting you and requesting that you check the records in order to respond to us takes time. And, frequently no correction is needed, because the date is correct per the record. Therefore, we ask you to **place a comment in the EBRS birth certificate confirming that the date of the last menses is correct per the record**. Please **only add** a comment if the mother's last menses was more than a year prior to the birth. If this is done, we will not need to call you, and we can directly respond to the NCHS reports.

## Is Infant Being Breastfed at Discharge Question Changing

The implied timing of this question has created some confusion in Oregon and nationwide. In 2008, 23 percent of our birth records had ‘Unknown’ as the answer. However, Oregon is fortunate that, with your help, we have seen a decreasing number of ‘Unknowns’ reported. This year only 11 percent of our birth records showed ‘Unknown’ as the answer. We believe clarifying this question will allow even more improvement in the data received.



Clarification is needed because the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) recently notified us of a change in the description of the question. Before this change, the question was described as whether the infant was being *breastfed at discharge from the hospital*. Now, the question is described as whether the infant was *breastfed during the period between birth and discharge*.

We will be updating our question in OVERS to reflect the change on August 2, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Shioishi, Vital Records Field Liaison, at 971.673.1166 or JoAnn Jackson, Registration Manager, at 971.673.1160.

## Oregon Registered Domestic Partnerships and Birth Certificates

DHS believes that all parents should be treated equally and with respect. Oregon’s Family Fairness Act allows Oregon Registered Domestic Partners (ORDP) to be included on the birth record as the legal parents of the child. CHS accepts birth records through EBRS with female ORDP as the legal parents without any additional documentation. Please note that by law the birth mother must be included on the Birth Certificate; therefore only female ORDP can be listed on the birth certificate as parents at the facility. Male ORDP must go through an additional legal process for both partners to

be listed as the parents on the birth certificate. If the birth mother is unmarried and one of the male ORDP is the biological parent of the child, he may be listed on the birth certificate if he and the mother sign a paternity form. The second father must be added through a court order.

### How to report a birth with ORDP parents

You can easily report female ORDP on the child’s birth certificate by selecting *Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership* as the marital status from the drop down list in EBRS. Once this option is selected, the

Father pages will open and allow you to enter the Domestic Partner's information. Even though the EBRS screen displays Father Information, the system recognizes that a Parent/Parent form should be used for certified copies. There is no need to send any additional form to CHS.

Domestic Partners should be treated equally and with the same respect given to Married Partners. Therefore, mothers

should not be required to show proof of their Oregon Registered Domestic Partnership unless you currently request proof of marriage from married parents.

Additional Information on this topic can be found at [www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/order/dp.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/order/dp.shtml) or by contacting JoAnn Jackson, Registration Manager, at 971.673.1160.

## Staff Turnover? Let us know

Are new staff members joining your team? Are staff members leaving your team? If so, it is important to notify the OVERS team in a timely fashion. It is especially important to end OVERS accounts for former employees because until you do, the former employee will still have access to your facilities' confidential birth records and could *potentially sign false records*.

When an employee is leaving your facility, you can notify the OVERS team to close the employee's OVERS account by calling, emailing or faxing the Center for Health Statistics.

When a birth clerk needs access to OVERS, request an OVERS enrollment form from the OVERS team by faxing, emailing, or calling the Center for Health Statistics. You can also obtain an enrollment form from the Center for Health Statistics website: [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/status.shtml#Accessing\\_OVERS](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/status.shtml#Accessing_OVERS)

**Contacting the Center for Health Statistics** - To contact the OVERS team, you can fax forms to Lynda Jackson at 971.673.1201, or you can email forms and letters to [chs.forms@state.or.us](mailto:chs.forms@state.or.us). You can also call the OVERS helpdesk if you have questions at 971.673.0279.

*Thank you* to the editor and writers who contributed to this newsletter:

Karen Hampton, Kerry Lionadh, Carol Sanders, Judy Shioishi, JoAnn Jackson, Carolyn Hogg, and Jennifer Woodward.

### Questions or Comments?

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# Call Us

## Amending a record and need to know who to call?

## Who are the CHS Managers?

### Paternities

Debbie Gott  
971-673-1155

### Birth Corrections

<1 year, Amanda Vega  
971-673-1169  
1+year, Johanna Collins  
971-673-1137

### Death Corrections

Patty Thompson  
971-673-1163

### Delayed Filings

Becki Buskirk  
971-673-1147

### Filiations

Tony Bojanowski  
971-673-1143

### Adoptions

Debbie Draghia  
971-673-1152

### OVERS Helpdesk

971-673-0279

### State Registrar

Jennifer Woodward  
971-673-1185

### Amendments/Certification

Carol Sanders  
971-673-1178

### Statistics Manager

Joyce Grant-Worley  
971-673-1156

### OVERS Manager

Karen Hampton  
971-673-1191

### Registration Manager

JoAnn Jackson  
971-673-1160

### Data Processing Supervisor

Cynthia Roeser  
971-673-0478

# Find Us

## The Center for Health Statistics Offices are located at:

800 N.E. Oregon St., Suite 225  
Portland, OR 97232-1201

## Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 14050  
Portland, OR 97293-0050

Find Information regarding birth, death, marriage and divorce on our website at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph//chs/index.shtml>

- **How to Order Records**
- **Amendment Records**
- **Registration of Records**

Find Information regarding the OVERS system (Oregon Vital Events Registration System) at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/overs/>