

**Report to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees of the Virginia  
General Assembly on Pregnant Women Support Fund  
September 2011**

**Background**

In 2007, the Virginia General Assembly enacted SB1088, which created the Pregnant Women Support Fund to “support women and families who are facing unplanned pregnancy.” Pursuant to §32.1-11.6 of the Code of Virginia, the Board of Health is required to create and administer the Virginia Pregnant Women Support Fund as a special nonreverting fund. The General Assembly established the following authority and responsibilities for the Board of Health when administering the fund:

- Authority to solicit gifts, donations, bequests, and grants on behalf of the Fund from any source and to deposit all moneys received in the Fund.
- Responsibility to establish an application process and related procedures for community health centers, migrant health centers, homeless health centers, and public-housing centers seeking grants from the Fund.
- Authority and responsibility to use the Fund solely for the purposes of carrying out the following activities:
  - Purchasing or upgrading ultrasound equipment;
  - Creating a separate program for domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking screening against pregnant women and new mothers;
  - Conducting a public campaign to increase public awareness;
  - Providing support services for students of institutions of higher education;
  - Providing funds to allow early childhood education programs to work with pregnant or parenting teens to complete high school and provide job training education; or
  - Providing for teenage or first time mothers education on the health needs of their infants through free home visits by registered nurses.

**Virginia Department of Health Activities That Support Women and Families**

From FY2007 through FY2010, no gifts, donations, bequests, or grants were received by the Fund.

Although VDH does not actively raise or solicit funds for the Virginia Pregnant Woman Support Fund, VDH actively pursues grant funds to support women and families, including those who are facing unplanned pregnancy. For example, VDH staff regularly review Grants.gov to identify funding opportunities and staff regularly submit applications for grant funding. Additionally, VDH supports women and their families with unplanned pregnancies through a variety of activities. Below is a summary VDH pregnancy-related programs and services that support women and families.

- *Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program*, which provides evidence-based home visiting programs in seven at-risk communities, including Danville, Fredericksburg, Montgomery-Radford, Norfolk, and Suffolk-Southampton.

- *Local Health Departments*, which either provide direct prenatal care services or make arrangements with local providers to ensure low income women receive care during pregnancy.
- *BabyCare Program*, which provides case management services to pregnant women in 22 health district offices and a small number of private community organizations, targeting high-risk pregnant women and infants up to 2 years of age.
- *First Time Motherhood / New Parents Initiative Program*, which promotes awareness of preconception and interconception issues through use of 2-1-1 VIRGINIA, the existing resource and referral system in Virginia, targeting women and men of childbearing age.
- *Resource Mothers Program*, which uses lay community health workers who mentor pregnant teens through this difficult time in their lives and help them make the transition to parenthood targeting teenagers throughout their pregnancy and up to their baby's first birthday.
- *Virginia Healthy Start/Loving Steps Program*, which provides case management and health education to reduce health disparities among African-American populations, targeting pregnant women in the cities of Petersburg and Norfolk and the county of Westmoreland.
- *Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)*, which provides nutrition education, breast feeding promotion and support, supplemental nutritious foods, and screening and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services targeting pregnant women, infants, and children under 5 years of age.
- *Family Planning Program*, which provides individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services in 34 health districts targeting low income women and men of child bearing age.
- *WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program*, which helps improve initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding among postpartum women participating in the WIC Program through community-based peer education and support.
- *Text4baby*, which is a national program using mobile phones to text health messages regarding pregnancy and early parenting promoted by VDH
- *Healthy Baby Begins with You*, which is a program to train peer educators on college campuses regarding the role of preconception care and healthy lifestyles to reduce infant mortality.

### **Current Activities Related to §32.1-11.6**

In September 2010, VDH was awarded \$1.5 million by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to administer and manage the Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens and Women Grant now known as the Pregnancy Assistance Fund Grant (PAF). The primary goal of the VDH PAF Project is to implement evidence-informed peer counselor programs through the development of an office of pregnant and parenting student services (OPPSS) at selected institutions of higher education (IHE). Each OPPSS will provide a myriad of health, educational, and social services and/or referrals to pregnant and parenting students aged 18-29 to assist them in achieving optimal health and completing their educational goals. A secondary goal of the grant is to address domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking on the participating college campuses. Therefore, the VDH PAF Project seeks to address two of the authorized purposes of §32.1-11.6 of the Code of Virginia by (1) “conducting a public awareness campaign to increase public awareness” and (2) “providing support services for students of institutions of higher education” across Virginia. Improving services for pregnant and new parenting students

who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking will be a component of the services provided at the selected IHEs.

The three major VDH PAF Project strategies are presented below.

1. Provide support services for students enrolled in institutions of higher education across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In June 2011, VDH developed and released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit applications from Virginia-based institutions of higher education interested in partnering with VDH on the PAF grant. The RFP solicited proposals for providing (a) health, academic, and social services information and (b) referrals for pregnant and parenting male and female students enrolled in institutions of higher education throughout Virginia. Two awards were made to the Virginia Community College System and Northern Virginia Community College in the total amount of \$996,661 to conduct program activities at twelve on-campus locations throughout Virginia. These awards were made based on the extent to which each institution justified the following RFP requirements:

- Program need;
- Program cost;
- Organizational capabilities and qualifications;
- Effectiveness of planned activities;
- Existing or planned community support; and
- A small business subcontracting plan.

Contracts are currently being finalized. It is anticipated that contracts will be initiated and each institution of higher education will begin implementing school-specific programs by October 31, 2011. Potentially impacted communities will include Alexandria, Annandale, Loudon, Manassas, Springfield, Woodbridge, Salem, Roanoke, Isle of Wight, Mecklenburg, Southampton, Suffolk, Franklin, Martinsville, Henry, Patrick, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Craig, Russell, Tazewell, Buchanan, Botetourt, Nottaway, Prince Edward, and Emporia.

2. Conduct a public awareness campaign of services available.

In July 2011, VDH initiated a contractual agreement with Virginia Broadcasting Solutions to (a) develop public service announcements through print, radio, and television media and (b) develop and maintain a web automated human interaction (WAHI) Internet site for the promotion of the PAF grant activities. Virginia Broadcast Solutions will assist VDH in developing a program brand with key promotion messages intended for use by participating IHE peer counselor programs and their campus-based media venues, including internal television/radio stations and websites. A plan for statewide distribution of program and services information will be developed during the 2012 VDH PAF Project year.

3. Improve services for pregnant women and new parents who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Through contractual agreements to begin October 2011, the partnering institutions of higher education will be required to devote 15 percent of the total program funds requested to improve the identification and referral of pregnant and newly parenting victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking to services. In addition, these institutions of higher education will be required to develop and implement a campus-based public awareness program regarding domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These activities will build upon each campus's existing prevention and awareness activities, and where none are currently being initiated, partnering institutions will use established public awareness campaigns designed for use on college campuses such as The RedFlag Campaign, which was launched in 2007 to college and university campuses across Virginia to address dating violence and promote the prevention of dating violence among college students.