Human Rights Day- December 10, 2022

International Human Rights Day is recognized on December 10 to remember the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the United Nations (2019), “This document proclaims that inalienable rights that everyone in entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. To learn more about the UDHR and the Key Messages for 75th anniversary of signing the document: click here.

Human rights are connected to fatherhood and fathers in many ways, but the most profound linkage is through sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). SRHR are considered a human right, but these rights are continuously violated in communities around the world. SRHR allows people to make their own decisions about their sexuality, childbearing, and other reproductive life goals. By encouraging fathers to be a part of their partners sexual and reproductive health and goals, families can make clear decisions and fathers can be advocates for their partners throughout their relationship. To learn more about SRHR and human rights: click here.

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Advocacy and Fatherhood

Personal Account with Advocacy
Jehrod Hall, Fatherhood Practitioner, Onondaga County Health Department (Syracuse, NY)

As a Fatherhood Coordinator and a mentor to the dads that I work with, I have found myself in the position to advocate for my participants on a regular basis. I jumped at the opportunity to make sure that these dads are being treated fairly and receiving all the pertinent information they may need to be involved in the pregnancy outcomes and the best dads they can be.

I take pride in being their biggest advocate; willing to stand up for someone who may not know the system or have the confidence in their voice that historically has not been welcomed.

Jehrod shares his personal story of how he used his knowledge and experience to advocate for his fiancé and son.

We checked into the hospital 4 days early due to my fiancé having preeclampsia. We had a birth plan and were not considered a priority because of the number of days left until the due date. She was in constant pain and told the nurses.

They told her not to worry it was normal and they would get the doctor as soon as possible. My fiancé told me she didn’t feel right and that something was wrong. I went to the nurse’s station and let them know that she needs to be seen now and that her concerns needed to be taken seriously. I was told okay go back into the room. I let them know that I would stay there until someone saw her. This frustrated the nurse but made them get the doctor sooner. The doctor came in 4 minutes later. After he examined her, he noticed some irregularities that resulted in the need for a cesarean (c-section), after the surgery they found that the umbilical cord had been wrapped around his neck three times. Having an emergency C-section allowed my son to be born healthy on October 10, 2020.

If I had not advocated for my fiancé and my son, he may not be here and not sure about the physical and mental health of my partner and our family. It is for this reason that I am passionate about my work with fathers and them being advocates for their families.
How one responds to finding a Primary Care Provider (PCP) and scheduling a doctor's visit for a child usually falls on just the mother; but that's not the case for Mr. TH. After months of stress and frustration, the family was able to find a PCP and book an early appointment for their daughter. When a baby starts to feel under the weather, all you need to do is call your doctor and hope to get a timely appointment. But what if you found out that your appointments will not be available for 5 months and you would have to sign into the online “MyChart” system to confirm registration?

TH immediately called the Fatherhood Practitioner to tell him about the situation and wanted to see if they can be able to visit with a doctor immediately so that their child would not fall behind on shots and immunizations. After listening to the family's needs and meeting with the medical team at the hospital, there were no routine appointments available for a child who was not sick, and their current medical coverage did not allow for any earlier appointment compounded by staff shortage.

The Fatherhood Practitioner suggested the family investigate other clinics for an earlier appointment. TH understood the situation and knew what he had to do something to address this delay. With Medicaid information, he called around in search of a clinic that would accept his insurance. Within a couple of days, not only was TH able to help find a PCP, but they were also able to book the appointment and be seen the next day. When asked about it, TH said, “I knew me taking the initiative was the right thing to do to advocate for my daughter’s health and well-being will always be my top priority. I refuse to give up and I will always put in the effort. It’s hard for me to just sit back and not take action on a matter that’s extremely important to me.”

Aaron Fields, Fatherhood Coordinator
Dallas Healthy Start – Parkland Hospital

This toolkit is designed and prepared in partnership with National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) staff and Fatherhood Practitioners across the NHSA membership network and subject matter experts.

The goal of the toolkit is to provide a resource for Fatherhood Practitioners and their colleagues to use in educating and serving fathers and men to be advocates for the mother of the baby and their partner and to ensure a healthy birth outcome for the child.

This tool will allow fathers to receive and understand general knowledge regarding all perinatal periods. Fathers will have a better understanding of questions to ask when engaging healthcare and health service delivery providers before, during and after pregnancy.
Navigating the Stress into Fatherhood

Managing stress as a father can be challenging and overwhelming at times. Learning new skills will help you become more equipped to meet challenges such as depression, caring for your baby/partner, time management, finances and alienation of family life.

Maternal Health

Maternal health is defined as the health of women before, during, and after pregnancy. The health of the mom often depends on factors such as where she lives, her educational level, her race, support system, access to quality healthcare, finances, access to family planning, nutritious food, job opportunities, safety, and human rights.

Pregnancy Warning Signs

Warning signs during pregnancy can range from mild symptoms to severe life-threatening illnesses. Some warning signs include: Vaginal bleeding, severe swelling (edema), abdominal pain, sore breasts, severe headaches, sudden weight gain and high blood pressure.

Stages of Labor

Labor usually starts two weeks before or after the estimated date of delivery. However, the exact trigger for the onset of labor is unknown. There are three stages of labor that describe the process of birth.

Postpartum Care

The postpartum period is defined as the time that occurs after birth and has three major phases that overview the physical and psychological changes that occur after the baby is born.

Fatherhood Advocacy Toolkit:
Navigating Support through the Perinatal Period

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