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**GENTLEMAN, THIS ONE'S FOR YOU**

# Hey dad, here's a fatherhood program

By **Kylie Stevens**

NEW dads will no longer feel excluded at Fairfield Hospital's antenatal and maternity wards, thanks to a new support program designed to make the whole process from pregnancy to birth right through to postnatal care more father-friendly.

It is one of three within the Sydney South West Area Health Service with the Dads 4 Dads program designed to strengthen the hands-on role of fathers.

New dads receive a father's starter

kit with information on matters such as how they can get involved through the pregnancy, how their relationships will change, parenting tips and services available. Male volunteers will be on hand to chat to new fathers in antenatal clinics and postnatal wards who then follow up with a phone call to see how they are coping.

The six volunteers are completing their training and are expected to begin their new roles at Fairfield shortly. Positive images of fathers and their children are also installed in a Fathers' Gallery at the hospital.

The program was a collaboration between Karitane, the health service parenting program, Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service and Arts for Health Program, Mission Australia and Uniting Care Burnside, funded with a \$10,000 grant under the NSW Government's Families First program.

Karitane program co-ordinator Trish Ryan was the brainchild behind the program, lobbied for the funding and devised the volunteer training program which is similar to Karitane's own model.

Details: 9794 1836.