Reporting race and ethnicity in SPARCS for Newborn Infants

1. Hospitals that provide maternity care services should evaluate how they assess, collect and report the race and ethnicity of newborn infants.

2. In a 2013 survey of a sample of New York hospitals, a significant number reported that the race and ethnicity of newborn infants reflects ONLY the race and ethnicity of the mother.

3. The reported race and ethnicity of infants and children should reflect the race(s) and ethnicity(ies) of both the infant’s mother and father. Previously, only one race and one ethnicity could be reported in SPARCS. Now up to a total of 10 different codes for race or ethnicity can be reported. The specific data collection standard for race and ethnicity must be a valid code in accordance with the CDC Race and Ethnicity Code Set - Version 1.0 (See: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/sparcs/bulletin/jun13.pdf)

4. Hospitals need to ensure that the staff involved in accessing, collecting and reporting the race and ethnicity of newborn infants understand the importance of accurately collecting this information and how to communicate with and ask parents for this information. In addition, hospitals need to have processes and systems in place to report the race(s) and ethnicity(ies) of both the mother and the father and ensure that they are reflected in the race and ethnicity codes reported for their newborn infant.

5. As hospitals develop new processes, the Department will be interested in determining what the “Best Practices” are, and to share this information with other hospitals.