### **Special Topic: Understanding Prenatal Substance Exposure and Child Welfare Implications**

### Child Welfare Training Toolkit



National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

### Acknowledgment



A program of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau



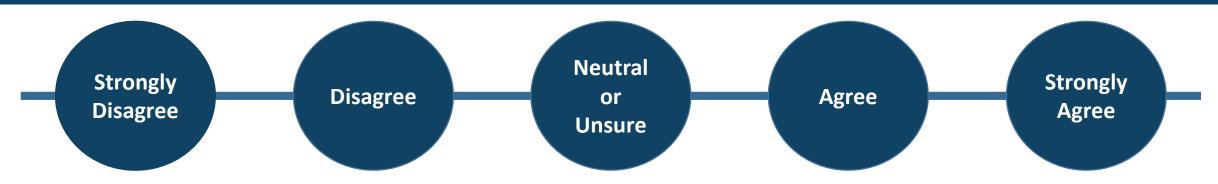
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## Learning Objectives

After completing this training, child welfare workers will:

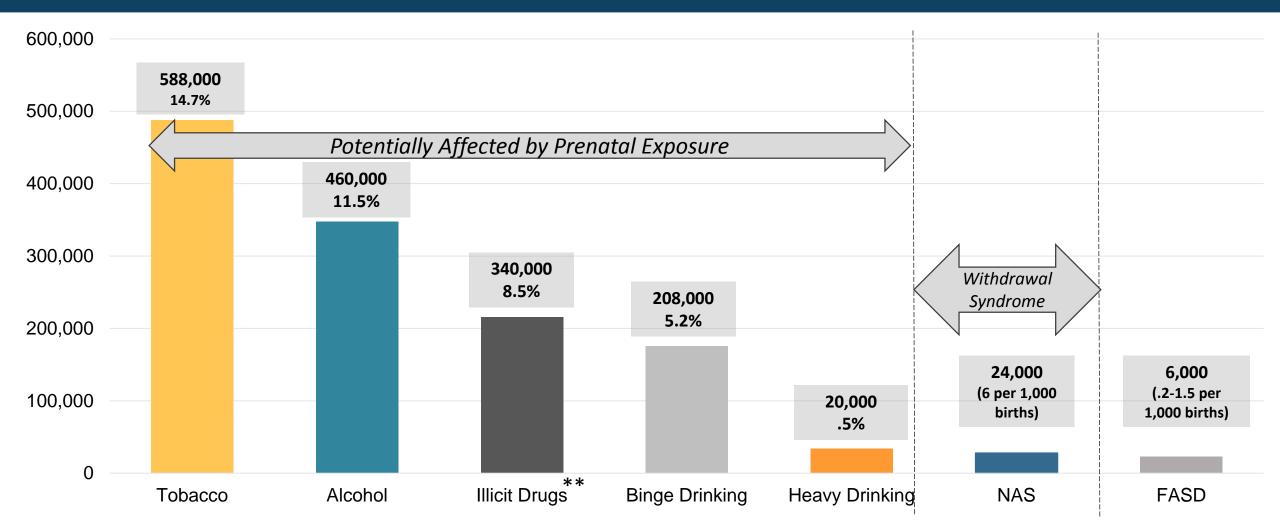
- Discuss the context and prevalence of prenatal substance use
- Identify the effects of prenatal substance use on infants and their families
- Discuss Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), and Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)
- Increase knowledge of screening and referral for treatment and resources
- Identify the treatment needs of parents and infants
- Value collaboration between systems of care for successful outcomes
- Understand the implications of amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) made by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 related to infants with prenatal substance exposure and their families

### **Collaborative Values Inventory**



- In different circumstances, any person could be a parent with a substance use disorder
- Newborns with positive tests for illegal drugs should be removed from their parent's custody
- Medication-assisted treatment, prescription drugs that treat opioid addiction, should be made available to pregnant women
- When a parent refuses substance use disorder treatment they should face penalties
- Substance use disorder treatment will only be effective if a parent wants treatment

### Estimated Number of Infants\* Affected by Prenatal Exposure, by Type of Substance and Infant Disorder, 2017



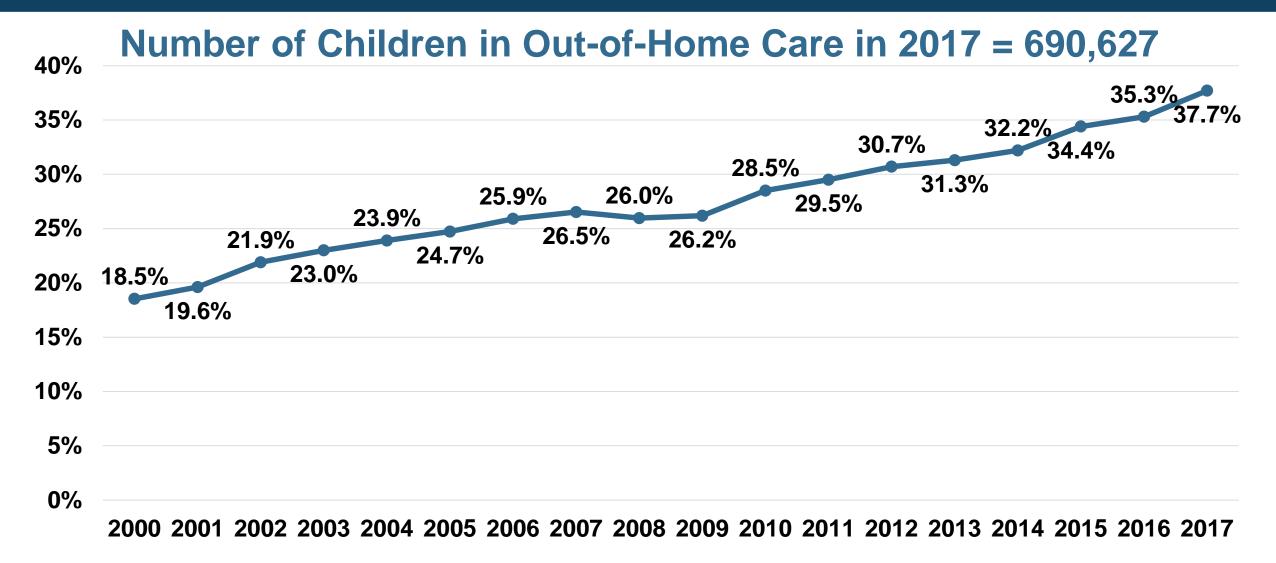
\*Approximately 4 million (3,855,500) live births in 2017; National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 67, No. 8; https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr67/nvsr67\_08-508.pdf

Estimates based on rates of past month drug use: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2017; https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHDetailedTabs2017/NSDUHDetailedTabs2017.pdf

\*\* Includes nine categories of illicit drug use: use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, and methamphetamine, as well as the non-medical use of prescription-type pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives

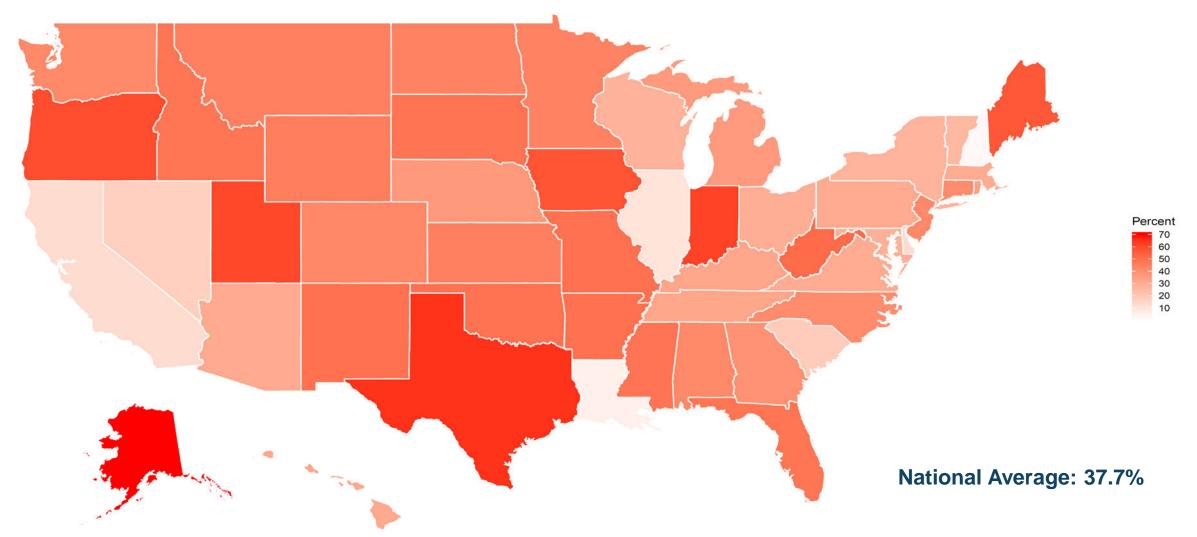
(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018; Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2018; Patrick et al., 2015; Milliren et. al, 2017; CDC, 2002)

### Prevalence of Parental Alcohol or Other Drug Use Reported as a Contributing Factor for Reason for Removal in the United States



Note: Estimates based on all children who entered out-of-home care at some point during the fiscal year. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018)

### Prevalence of Parental Alcohol or Other Drug Use as a Contributing Factor for Reason for Removal by State, 2017

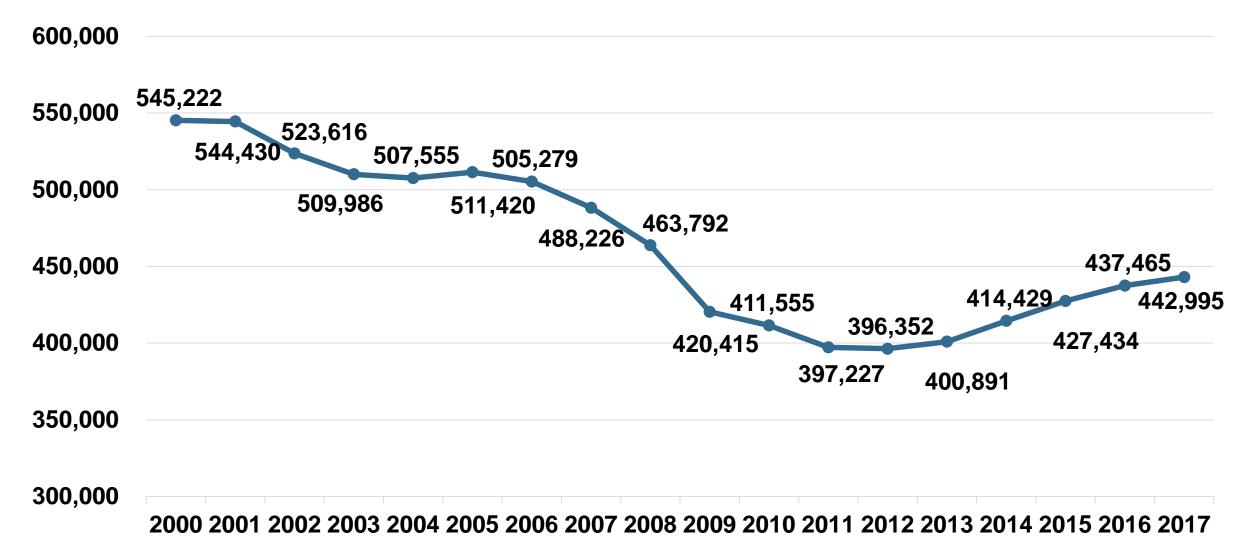


Efforts in data collection have improved in recent years, but significant undercount remains in some states.

Note: Estimates based on *children in out of home care at some point* during Fiscal Year 2017.

Source: AFCARS Data, 2000-2017

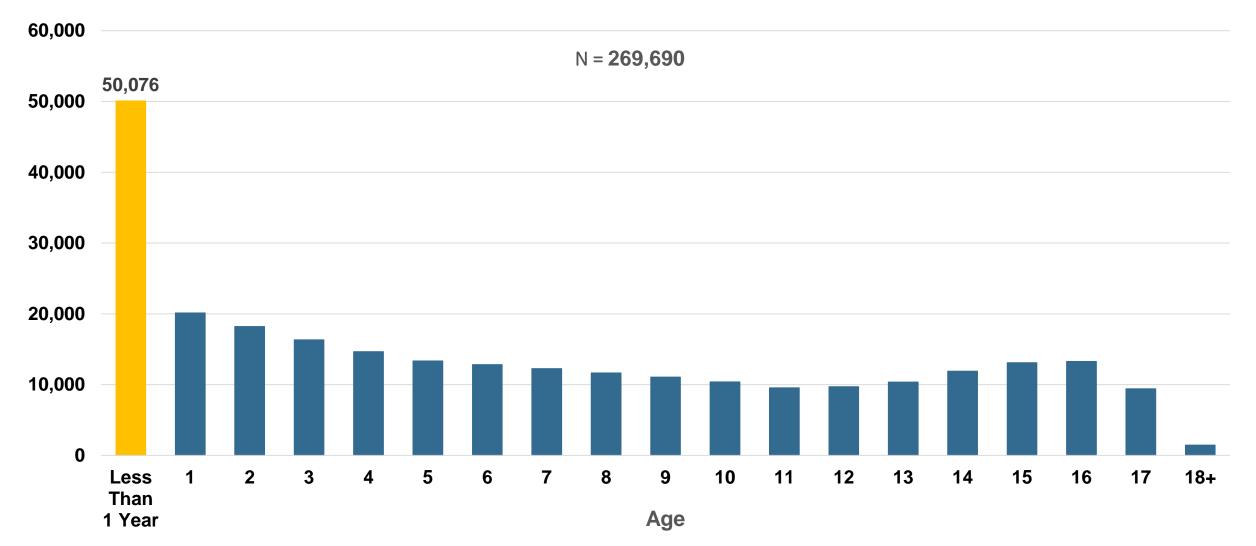
### Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care at End of Fiscal Year in the United States, 2000 to 2017



Note: Estimates based on *children in foster care* as of September 30

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018)

### Number of Children who Entered Foster Care, by Age at Removal in the United States, 2016



Note: Estimates based on children who entered out of home care during Fiscal Year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018)

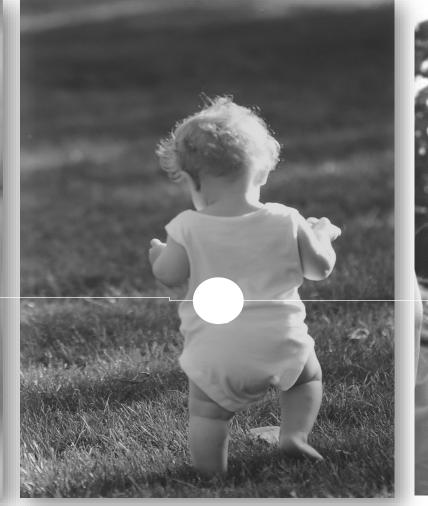
### Effects of Prenatal Substance Exposure

#### **American Academy of Pediatrics Technical Report**

Comprehensive review of ~275 peer reviewed articles over 40 years (1968-2006)

### **Short-Term**

Birth Anomalies Fetal Growth Neurobehavioral Withdrawal



(Behnke & Smith, 2013)

Long-Term

Achievement

**Behavior** 

Cognition

Language

Growth

### Short-Term Effects of Prenatal Substance Exposure

	Growth	Anomalies	Withdrawal	Neurobehavioral
Alcohol	Strong Effect	Strong Effect	No Effect	Effect
Nicotine	Effect	No consensus	No Effect	Effect
Marijuana	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Effect
Opiates	Effect	No Effect	Strong Effect	Effect
Cocaine	Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Effect
Methamphetamine	Effect	No Effect	Lack of Data	Effect

(Behnke & Smith, 2013)

### Long-Term Effects of Prenatal Substance Exposure

	Growth	Behavior	Cognition	Language	Achievement
Alcohol	Strong Effect	Strong Effect	Strong Effect	Effect	Strong Effect
Nicotine	No consensus	Effect	Effect	Effect	Effect
Marijuana	No Effect	Effect	Effect	No Effect	Effect
Opiates	No Effect	Effect	No consensus	Lack of Data	Lack of Data
Cocaine	No consensus	Effect	Effect	Effect	No consensus
Methamphetamine	Lack of Data				

(Behnke & Smith, 2013)

## **Complex Interplay of Factors**

#### Interaction of various prenatal and environmental factors:

- Family characteristics
- Family trauma
- Prenatal care
- Exposure to multiple substances (alcohol and tobacco)
- Early childhood experiences in bonding with parent(s) and caregiver(s)
- Other health and psychosocial factors



# Challenges to Mother-Infant Dyad Affected by Substance Use Disorders

#### For the Mother

Altered responses

Stigma/Negative Stereotypes

Lack of parenting role models

Low parental confidence

Lifestyle changes related to drug seeking and drug use

Exposure to Violence or Chaotic Environment

Maternal Brain Changes

- Normal infant cues perceived as irritating
- Difficulties with self-regulation

**Psychiatric Comorbidities** 

• Depression, anxiety, PTSD

Health ConcernsHIV, Hep C, HSV, STDs



#### For the Child

Developmental Harm

Neglect or Physical Harm

Repeated Exposure: in-utero or secondary exposure

Altered trajectories of development due to parental responsiveness

Risk of child maltreatment and physical harm

#### Exposure to Violence

Effects on child development and emotional well-being

Acquired infections with health and developmental consequences

(Velez & Jansson, 2008; Velez & Jansson, 2015)

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# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

## Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

#### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder:**

- A non-diagnostic umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother consumed alcohol during pregnancy
- These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications

#### **Possible diagnoses within the spectrum include:**

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
- Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)
- Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)
- Static Encephalopathy/Alcohol-Exposed (SE/AE)
- Neurobehavioral Disorder/Alcohol-Exposed (ND/AE)

(National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., 2015)

### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

#### **Prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders:**

- Estimated at 9.1 per 1,000 live births,
- A review of in-school screening and diagnosis studies suggest that the national rate could potentially be closer to 50 per 1,000

#### Factors that influence the effect that alcohol has on the developing fetus:

- Amount of alcohol
- Pattern and timing of exposure
- Genetics
- Mother's use of tobacco and/or other substances
- Mother's health and nutrition
- Mother's level of stress and/or trauma
- Mother's age

## Possible Effects of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

- Exposure to alcohol in utero can lead to impairment in the following neuropsychological domains:
  - Intellectual performance
  - Executive function
  - Learning and memory
  - Language
  - Visual-spatial ability
  - Motor function
  - Attention
  - Activity levels

#### • Prenatal alcohol exposure can also lead to behavioral problems such as:

- Adaptive dysfunction
- Academic difficulties
- Increased rates of psychiatric disorders

### Unique Aspects of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

- Alcohol is legal and perceived as a "low threat" substance, making prevention challenging
- Diagnosis requires a medical evaluation and neurodevelopmental assessment conducted by a multidisciplinary team (Cook et al., 2016)
- Neurobehavioral outcomes depend on the dose and pattern of alcohol consumption and the developmental stage when the fetus was exposed (Mattson et al., 2011)
- Primary disabilities resulting from FASD can lead to secondary disabilities including:
  - Issues in school
  - Mental health problems
  - Inappropriate sexual behavior
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Involvement in the criminal justice system without early intervention and treatment (Benz et al., 2009)

(Cook et al., 2016; Mattson et al., 2011; Benz et al., 2009)

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)

# Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

#### **Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome\*:**

 Refers to withdrawal symptoms resulting from exposure to a variety of substances including opioids, nicotine, benzodiazepines and certain serotonin reuptake inhibitors

#### **Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome:**

- Withdrawal from opioid exposure
- \* These terms are sometimes used interchangeably

(American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2017; Jansson et al., 2009; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018; Jones et al., 2012)



The reporting of neonatal abstinence syndrome has increased over the past 15 years

A number of data sources have looked at the incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome. While it appears that the incidence is rising due to the opioid epidemic, it is unclear whether this rise is due to increased attention to neonatal abstinence syndrome and improvements in identification, or an increase in infants being born with neonatal abstinence syndrome. In 2000, 1.2 per 1,000 hospital births were diagnosed as having Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

(Patrick et al., 2012)

In 2016 data from 23 hospitals in the U.S. pediatric system indicate 20 per 1,000 live births were diagnosed as having Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

(Milliren et al., 2017)

# Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

- Neonatal abstinence syndrome occurs with notable variability, with 50-80% of exposed infants developing symptoms
- Of those infants who develop symptoms, approximately **50%** receive treatment
- Neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome is an expected and treatable condition that follows prenatal exposure to opioids
- Symptoms generally begin within 1-3 days after birth but may take 5-10 days to appear

(American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2017; National Institutes of Health, 2014; Hudak & Tan, 2012; Jansson et al., 2009; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018; Jones et al., 2012)



## Unique Risks of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome



Cues from babies are difficult to interpret because of:

- Escalation of neonatal abstinence syndrome display
- Use of medication
- Prolonged hospital stay



Inaccurate interpretation of cues by parents leads to:

- Decreases in parenting confidence
- Inappropriate response



Lack of training and/or protocols among hospital staff can lead to:

- Over/under medication
- Premature hospitalization discharge
- Re-hospitalization

(Velez & Jansson, 2008; Velez & Jansson, 2015)

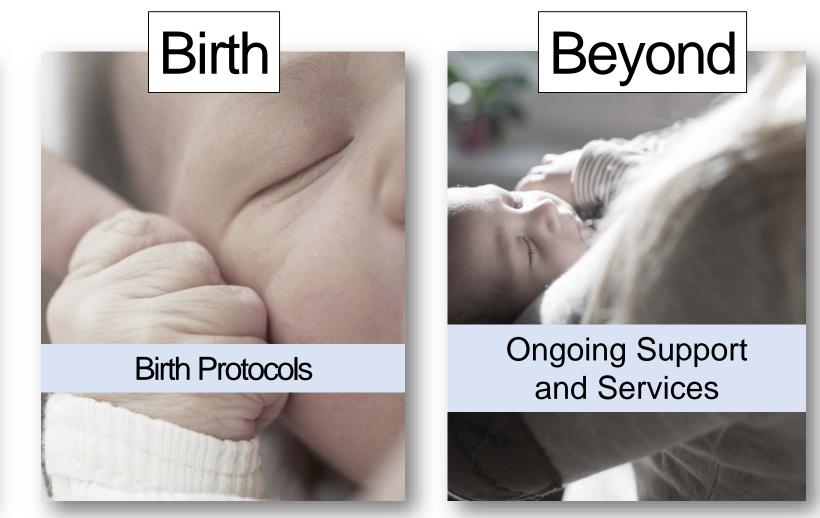
# Screening and Referral

### Opportunities and Challenges

For women with substance use disorders and their infants and families



Prenatal Screening Substance Use Disorder Treatment



(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017)

# Practice Strategies to Support Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure and their Families



- •Use the convening power of partners to meet with hospitals and health providers to create change
- •Clarify how substance use disorders are identified during pregnancy
- •Ensure effective treatment solutions for infant and family are available
- Understand the recovery process some parents can safely remain/reunify with children when they are in treatment and recovery

### Practice Strategies to Support Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure and their Families



- Hospitals universally screen mothers at delivery
- Infants are tested based on identified criteria and policies
- Hospitals understand and follow notification criteria
- Non-pharmacological treatments for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome are used, including breastfeeding and rooming-in where not contraindicated

# Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

### **Medication-Assisted Treatment**



As part of a comprehensive treatment program, medication-assisted treatment has been shown to:

- Increase retention in treatment
- •Decrease illicit opioid use
- •Decrease criminal activities, re-arrest and reincarceration
- Decrease drug-related HIV risk behavior
- Decrease pregnancy-related complications
- •Reduce maternal craving and fetal exposure to illicit drugs

## Benefits of Medication-Assisted Treatment for Pregnant Women

Stability for pregnant woman and fetus including prevention of relapse

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018)

### Medications Used to Treat Opioid Use Disorders

- Methadone (50-year research base)
- Buprenorphine (Subutex; 2010- MOTHER Study)
- Buprenorphine-Naloxone Combination (Suboxone®; Zubsolv)
- Naltrexone Extended-Release (Vivitrol®) once per month injection
- Naloxone (Narcan®) Reverses overdose

Used During Pregnancy

# "...opiate dependence is a medical disorder and ... pharmacologic agents are effective in its treatment."

(National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017; Jones et al., 2012)

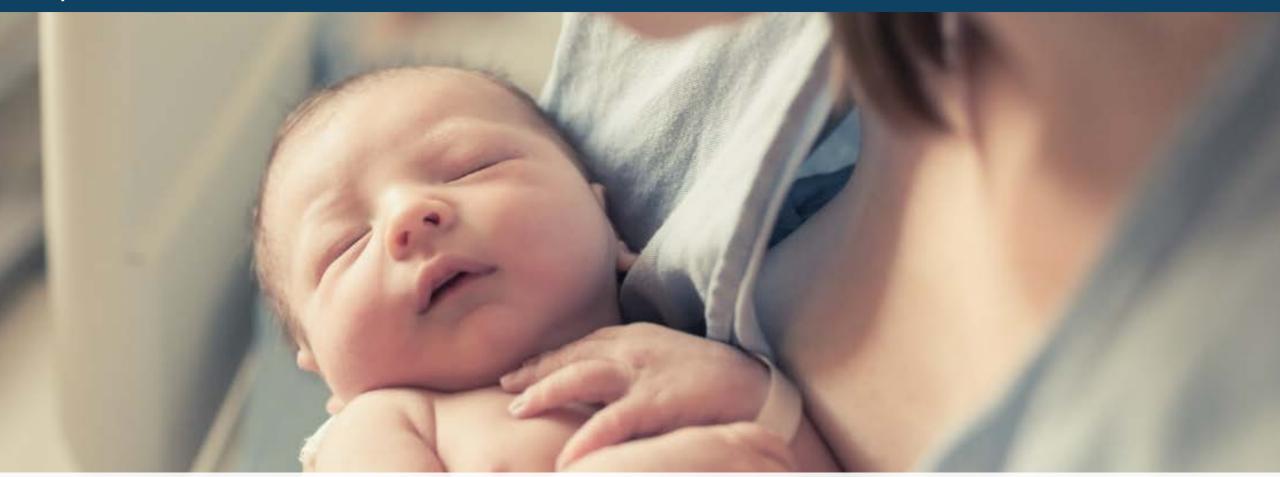
# Treatment for Parents, Infants and Families

### Supporting the Mother/Infant Dyad

- The neonatal period is an optimal time to begin interventions to optimize dyadic interaction
- Improving clinician attitudes positively impact dyadic interactions
- Nurses who demonstrated caring behaviors towards mothers were better able to help them recognize and interpret infant cues, thus enhancing mother-infant interactions



Interventions for infant treatment focused on a simplified approach to assessment, nonpharmacological therapies, care outside of the NICU, and empowering messages to parents that led to...



...substantial and sustained **decreases** in average **length of stay**, the proportion of **infants treated with morphine**, and **hospital costs**.

(Grossman et al., 2017)

### Postpartum Period

The postpartum period can be a challenging time for mothers using opioids and those with substance use disorders...

- Women who use opioids during pregnancy are at increased risk of depression, anxiety, and maternal death compared to those not using opioids
- Recent studies indicate that nearly half of maternal deaths in the postpartum period may be related to substance use and 1 in 5 specifically related to overdose
- Women with opioids use disorders are more susceptible to overdose between 7 and 12 months postpartum than any other time during pregnancy or the year after their infant's birth
- Women are more likely to overdose during pregnancy and throughout the first year postpartum if they are not on pharmacotherapy to treat their opioid use disorder

#### A Family Focus

#### Parent Recovery

Parenting skills and competencies

Family connections and resources

Parental mental health Medication management Parental substance use Domestic violence Family Recovery and Well-being Basic necessities Employment Housing Child care Transportation Family counseling Specialized parenting Child Well-being Well-being/behavior Developmental/health School readiness Trauma Mental health Adolescent substance abuse At-risk youth prevention

(Werner, Young, Dennis, & Amatetti, 2007)

#### Benefits of Family-Centered Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Mothers who participated in the Celebrating Families! Program and received integrated case management showed significant improvements in <u>recovery</u>, including reduced mental health symptoms, reduction in risky behaviors, and longer program retention (Zweben et al., 2015).

Women who participated in programs that included a "high" level of family and children's services were twice as likely to reunify with their children, as those who participated in programs with a "low" level of these Services (Grella, Hser & Yang, 2006).

> Retention and completion of comprehensive substance use treatment have been found to be the strongest predictors of reunification with children for parents with substance use disorders (Green, Rockhill, & Furrer, 2007; Marsh, Smith, & Bruni, 2011).

### **Rethinking Family Recovery**



- Parents' recovery occurs in the context of family relationships
- Services that strengthen families and support parent-child relationships help keep children safe

~85% of children in substantiated abuse and neglect cases either stay home or go home

(Children and Family Futures created estimate based on Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data, 2013)

# Collaborative Practice in Child Welfare

#### The Importance of Collaboration

Substance use and child maltreatment are often **multi-generational problems** that can only be addressed through a coordinated approach across multiple systems to address needs of both parents and children

### The Necessity of Collaboration

Meaningful collaboration across systems that includes agreement on **common values**, enhanced **communication** and **information sharing**, blended funding and data collection for **shared outcomes**...

...results in improved outcomes for families including **increased engagement and retention** of parents in substance use treatment, **fewer children removed** from parental custody, **increased family reunification** post-removal and **fewer children reentering** the child welfare system and foster care.

# Child Welfare Legislation Related to Infants with Prenatal Exposure



### 1974

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)



### 2003

The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act

2010

The CAPTA Reauthorization Act

## 2016

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) **Primary Changes** in **CAPTA Related to Infants** with Prenatal Substance Exposure

### 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

- Federal funding to support prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities related to child abuse and neglect
- Current funding provides several grant programs:
  - State Grants: a formula grant to improve Child Protective Services (CPS)
  - **Discretionary grants**: competitively awarded funds to support research, technical assistance, and demonstration projects
  - **Community-based Grants** (CBCAP): funding to all states for support of community-based activities to prevent child abuse and neglect
  - Children's Justice Act Grants: to States and territories to improve the assessment, investigation, and/or prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases with particular focus on sexual abuse and exploitation of children, child fatalities, and children who are disabled or with serious health disorders

### 2003 The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003

- Amended CAPTA and created new conditions for states to receive their state grant:
  - Congressional report states: "To identify infants at risk of child abuse and neglect so appropriate services can be delivered to the infant and mother to provide for the safety of the child" and...
  - "the development of a safe plan of care...to protect a child who may be at increased risk of maltreatment, regardless of whether the State had determined that the child had been abused or neglected as a result of prenatal exposure"
- To receive state grant, governor must assure they have policies and procedures for:
  - Appropriate referrals to address needs of infants "born with and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure"
  - "health care providers involved in the delivery or care of such infants notify the child protective services system..."
  - "the development of a plan of safe care..."

### 2010 The CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010

• Conditions for receipt of state grant were updated to clarify definition of substance-exposed infant and added Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder:

"Born with and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder"

- Added reporting requirements to Annual State Data Reports to include:
  - Number of children referred to child welfare services identified as prenatally drug exposed or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
  - Number of children involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect determined to be eligible for referral to Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (children under age 3)
  - Number of children referred to agencies providing early intervention services under Part C

### 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)

• Further clarified population requiring a Plan of Safe Care:

"Born with and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder," **specifically removing "illegal"** 

• Required the Plan of Safe Care to include needs of both the infant and family/caregiver:

"the **development of a Plan of Safe Care** for the infant born and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder to ensure the safety and well-being of such infant following release from the care of healthcare providers, including through –(I)addressing the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of the infant and affected family/caregiver"

### 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)

- Specified data reported by States, to the extent practicable, through National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)
  - The number of infants identified as being affected by substance abuse, withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
  - The number of infants for whom a Plan of Safe Care was developed
  - The number of infants for whom referrals were made for appropriate services—including services for the affected family or caregiver
- Specified increased monitoring and oversight
  - Children's Bureau through the annual CAPTA report in the State plan
  - States to ensure that Plans of Safe Care are implemented and that families have referrals to and delivery of appropriate services

#### **CAPTA Plans of Safe Care Best Practices**

- Can be developed prior to birth of the infant
- Includes a comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment
- Has multiple intervention points: pregnancy, birth, and beyond
- Addresses needs of infant and family or caregiver
- Puts structure in place to ensure coordination of, access to, and engagement in services

#### How is Plan of Safe Care Different?

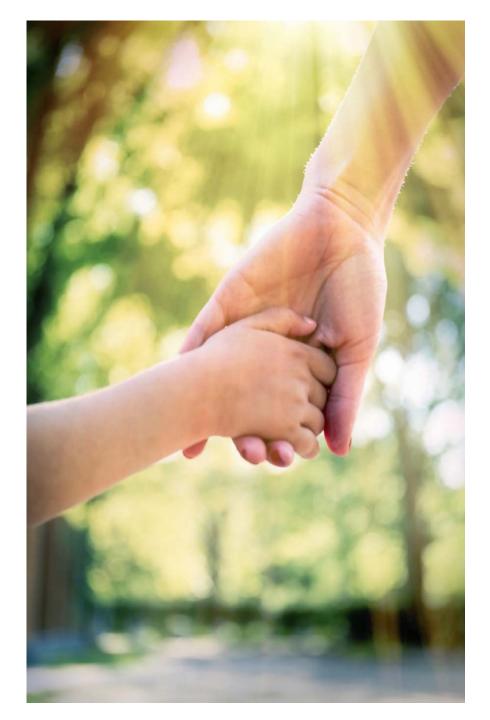
Child Welfare Services Safety Dlan Substance use Disorder Treatment Dia

Hospital Discharge Plan

#### Why Should We Do Plans of Safe Care?

Expectations based on experiences with grantees and knowledge of the benefits of collaboration:

- Healthier babies and families
- Improved collaboration and cost saving





#### National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

#### A Program of the

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

and the

Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

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### Resources

#### Resources

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