



The prevalence of opioid use disorder per 1,000 delivery hospitalizations increased from 1.5 in 1999 to 6.5 in 2014.⁵



The age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths increased from 6.1 per 100,000 standard population in 1999 to 21.7 in 2017.⁴



Every 15 minutes, a baby is born suffering from opioid withdrawal.³

ISSUE OVERVIEW

The United States is in the midst of an unprecedented opioid epidemic. Opioids are a class of drugs used to reduce pain.¹ They include prescription opioids (e.g. oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl) and the illegal drug heroin.¹ Risks of opioid use include addiction (i.e. opioid use disorder), overdose, and death.¹

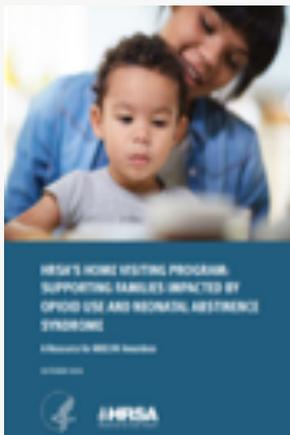
Opioid use disorder (OUD) in women who become pregnant can lead to numerous negative outcomes. Newborns with prenatal exposure to opioids may develop Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) or Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS).² NAS occurs when babies experience withdrawal from the drug after birth. NAS complications include low birthweight, breathing and feeding problems, and seizures.² In addition, untreated opioid addiction is associated with high risk behaviors that may lead to sexually transmitted infections, violence, and crime.¹

Prevention and access to treatment for opioid addiction and overdose reversal drugs are critical to fighting this epidemic. The use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) during pregnancy, coupled with counseling and behavioral therapy, is the recommended best practice for the care of pregnant women with OUD.¹

In addressing the opioid crisis, MCHB programs support a system of care that addresses the unique needs of women and children, including surveillance of the target population; promoting the health of women before, during and between pregnancies; screening women for mental and substance use disorders; referring to treatment services as needed; and promoting healthy development of infants.

How HRSA is Addressing the Opioid Epidemic in MCH Populations

In HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, our programs fundamentally promote mental health and well-being for maternal and child populations across the lifespan. This aligns with our mission to improve the health of America's mothers, children, and families. MCHB puts the opioid crisis in this context of maternal and child behavioral health and wellbeing.



Grantees in HRSA's [Healthy Start](#) and [Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting](#) (MIECHV) programs:

- Use evidence-based approaches to screen, intervene, and refer perinatal women and parents of young children, to treatment and recovery support services
- Provide health education and guidance for parents of young children including caring for infants born with NAS

In October 2018, HRSA released a comprehensive resource for MIECHV awardees, [Supporting Families Impacted by Opioid Use and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome](#) <https://bit.ly/2Fy1ZsD>.

1 American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee Opinion (2017): Opioid Use and Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy

2 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6609a2.htm>

3 <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/dramatic-increases-in-maternal-opioid-use-neonatal-abstinence-syndrome>

4 <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db329.htm>

5 https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6731a1.htm?s_cid=mm6731a1_w

States and territories have discretion in the use of [Title V Maternal and Child Block Grant](#) funds to address their unique needs through gap-filling clinical services, non-clinical services, as well as activities and infrastructure to carry out the core public health functions of assessment, assurance, and policy development. Examples of states' use of funds that relate to opioids and NAS, include:

- Teleconsultation services for health providers treating perinatal women with psychiatric and substance use disorders
- Using a Maternal Mortality Review Committee to explore the relationship between maternal mortality and mental health, and more



HRSA is hosting a series of MCHB Grand Challenges including the **Addressing Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnant Women and New Moms Challenge** to improve access to substance use disorder treatment. The challenge will award \$375,000 in prizes to support tech innovations that improve access to quality health care, including substance use disorder treatment, recovery, and support services for pregnant women with opioid use disorders, their infants, and families. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2NnsvJl>.

With HRSA support, the National Academy for State Health Policy released an October 2018 report entitled **State Options for Promoting Recovery among Pregnant and Parenting Women with Opioid or Substance Use Disorder** with policy recommendations and lessons-learned from ongoing efforts in Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Review the report at <https://bit.ly/2Ss77Rg>.