

# Missouri among five states selected to participate in project maternal opioid use



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(2.21.18) JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Missouri is one of five states selected by the National Governor’s Association to work on a new project titled, “Addressing Maternal Opioid Use Disorder to Prevent and Reduce the Effects of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS): Preventing NAS Learning Lab.” This project will be a collaborative effort between the Governor’s Office, Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), Missouri Hospital Association (MHA) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). Together representatives from these organizations, along with those from the other states selected, will work together to better serve pregnant and post-natal women with opioid use disorder and improve health outcomes for their babies.

This opportunity will enable the Missouri team to develop resources and increase access to Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) screening and treatment with the intent of preventing NAS. While Missouri has many programs and services available to target OUD in mothers and the prevention and treatment of NAS, there are several challenges and barriers the team hopes to overcome.

“The Department of Social Services is very proud to be a part of this strong collaborative that will enable Missouri to more effectively help thousands of women and their babies overcome the devastating impact of opioid use disorder so they can have healthy, safe, and productive lives,” said Steve Corsi, Psy.D., Director, DSS. The collaborative will work to develop OUD recommendations that can be deployed statewide, including increasing availability of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and OUD treatment and the prevalence of OUD-diagnosed pregnant women in treatment. Current data indicate that an increasing number of women of childbearing age are involved with opioids, both illicit drugs and legally-prescribed narcotic pain medications. In Missouri, the rates of NAS have gone up among all races, but the greatest increases have been seen in minority populations.

Director of DHSS, Dr. Randall Williams, says, “We are incredibly appreciative that Missouri has been selected by the National Governor’s Association to further our work to help prevent neonatal abstinence syndrome and help moms and babies that need our assistance. Governor Greitens and the First Lady saw firsthand at the WISH Clinic in St. Louis this summer the incredible work Dr. Jaye Shyken and others are doing, and as an obstetrician and gynecologist I personally appreciate their and the NGA’s support of our efforts.”

Over the past year, DHSS held nine opioid summits across the state. These summits included speakers from state, local and private organizations, along with individuals impacted by opioid use. Additionally, Dr. Williams convened stakeholders from every local public health agency in the state at the Statewide Public Health Meeting to discuss next steps regarding OUD and a review of what we have learned from each other and how to put those items into practice. Participation in the NAS Learning Lab is one of several steps the department is taking combat the opioid crisis in Missouri.

Additional information regarding the opioid epidemic in Missouri can be found on the DHSS website at <http://health.mo.gov/data/opioids/>. For more information on the state’s initiatives, available resources and statistics related to the crisis, please visit <https://opioids.mo.gov/>.

About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services: The department seeks to be the leader in protecting health and keeping people safe. More information about DHSS can be found at [health.mo.gov](http://health.mo.gov).