



PROGRAM AIMS TO REDUCE OPIOID USE IN NEW MOTHERS
Effort is part of continued response to opioid epidemic

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GRANITE CITY, Ill. – The number of babies born in Illinois to mothers who used opioids during pregnancy is on the rise. Infants can be born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) whether their mothers used prescription painkillers containing opioids or an illicit drug like heroin.

NAS leads to longer hospital stays and higher hospital charges. The median hospital stay in 2016 was 11 days longer for babies with NAS than for those without it. Median hospital charges were \$33,700 for babies with NAS compared to \$4,400 for babies without it.

A new program in Southern Illinois aims to help mothers, infants, and families caught in the opioid epidemic.

Chestnut Health Systems, with several partner agencies, will launch the program later this year with \$217,000 in funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery.

The program aims to reduce substance use and mental health symptoms; improve daily living; increase parenting knowledge; help mothers practice healthy parenting behaviors; increase substance-free births; ensure that children reach and maintain developmental milestones; increase and maintain children's social emotional functioning; and increase family functioning.

"The program will go beyond treating only the mother, because the importance of considering her family's needs is well documented," said Brent Cummins, Director of Adult Addiction Treatment and Recovery Support for Chestnut Health Systems. "Research shows that relationships – especially with family and children – play an important role in women's substance use, treatment, and relapse. Seventy percent of women entering treatment have children. Those children are at high risk of abuse, neglect, developmental problems, and future substance abuse," said Cummins.

Women who live in Madison, St. Clair, Jersey, Macoupin, Bond, Montgomery, and Clinton Counties will be eligible for services. Treatment will be available for pregnant and postpartum women living with opioid use disorder. Chestnut will coordinate care and support services including mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, family supports, life skills, job development, and recovery support services. Chestnut's other services and partnering social service agencies, hospitals, law enforcement, and physician offices will identify participants.

About the funding

These services are funded in full or in part through a State Opioid Response Grant (SOR) (TI-18-015) to the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

About Chestnut Health Systems

Chestnut Health Systems is a non-profit organization that has cared since 1973 for persons needing behavioral health services. Chestnut provides substance use disorder treatment, mental health counseling, primary health care, credit counseling, and housing and supportive services. It is a leader in substance use-related research. More at www.chestnut.org.

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