

ABOUT

# The Perinatal Behavioral Health Initiative



*The goal of this initiative is to improve maternal and family outcomes for perinatal substance use disorders and mental illness, including newborn drug exposure, neonatal abstinence syndrome, foster care placement, and perinatal complications.*

The Perinatal Behavioral Health Initiative provides funding and technical assistance to allow medical practices that provide prenatal and post-partum care to implement a coordinated, team-based approach that improves outcomes for women with substance use disorders or mental illness. The team-based model of care pairs obstetric providers with a behavioral health clinician (such as a social worker or licensed addictions counselor) and includes strong care coordination and peer support to reduce the adverse outcomes of perinatal mental illness and substance use disorders for newborns and their families. The Montana Healthcare Foundation and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services have partnered to develop this initiative.

Substance use and mental illness during and after pregnancy have serious impacts on the health and well-being of mothers, children, and families around Montana: the problem is on the rise, and affected families are not adequately served by Montana's current health care system and social services. The number of Montana children in foster care more than doubled since 2011; out of more than 3,200 children in foster care in 2016, 64% were removed from the home for reasons related to parental substance abuse. Among Medicaid patients, the percentage of infants with perinatal drug exposure increased from 3.7% in 2010 to 12.3% in 2016. In a 2017 report, we found that only 6% of Montana's state-licensed substance use disorder treatment programs serve pregnant women or young families.

Based on national evidence and examples from other states, implementing a supportive, team-based approach to prenatal and postpartum care along with better coordination between health care providers and social service agencies offer a powerful way to improve these outcomes.



777 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 206  
BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59715

[INFO@MTHCF.ORG](mailto:INFO@MTHCF.ORG) | 406 451 7060