

Substance Abuse Updates for NC Local Health Departments

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PERINATAL SUBSTANCE USE PROJECT
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Objectives

- Review recent changes to substance abuse referrals in North Carolina.
- Examine results from the North Carolina Local Health Departments and Perinatal Substance Use Assessment.

Substance Abuse Referrals in NC

- Perinatal Substance Use Project
 - Substance abuse referrals for women who are pregnant and/or have children
 - Now located at the Alcohol/Drug Council of North Carolina
 - Contact info:
 - ✦ **1-800-688-4232**
 - ✦ NC Family Health Resource Line still works (#3 to be connected)
 - ✦ Direct line: 919-493-5414

NC Local Health Departments & Perinatal Substance Use



Assessment Overview

- **Goal:** Achieve greater understanding of current health department practices surrounding perinatal substance use is needed in order to increase education and referrals for pregnant women in North Carolina who use alcohol and illegal or unprescribed drugs.
- Funded by a March of Dimes Community Grant

Advisory Committee

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Why an assessment?

- **ACOG & AAP recommendations**
- **NC DPH requirements**
- **Anecdotal feedback from LHDs**

Why is screening important?

Professional Organization	Recommendation	Recommended Frequency of Screening	Specific Tool Endorsement
American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2008)	Universal screening for all pregnant women	Intake appointment	TWEAK, T-ACE, NIAAA questionnaire
American Academy of Pediatrics (1998)	Universal screening for all pregnant women	Not specified	Verbal, maternal urine, newborn urine & meconium
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (2008)	Universal screening for all pregnant women	Not specified	TWEAK
U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (2004)	Universal screening for all pregnant women	Not specified	TWEAK, T-ACE

Barriers to Screening & Interventions

- Provider-related barriers
- Guideline-related barriers
- Patient-related Barriers
- Environmental-related barriers

Assessment Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Determine what policies and protocols in North Carolina local health departments address perinatal substance use screening, intervention, and education.
- **Objective 2:** Determine what knowledge, attitude, and skill barriers exist for screening, interventions, education, and referrals in LHDs.
- **Objective 3:** Determine what technical assistance and policy support is needed from state and regional entities to provide evidence-based perinatal substance use screening, interventions, and education in LHDs.

Assessment Methods

- **Policy review**
 - 67 policies received
- **Survey**
 - 247 individuals responded
- **Focus Groups**
 - Four groups
- **Key Informant Interviews**
 - Five interviews

Patients

- **North Carolina LHD maternal health programs struggle to meet the complex needs of women using drugs and alcohol during pregnancy.**

Patients

- Women who use drugs and alcohol during pregnancy and seek prenatal care at LHDs have multiple, complex medical and psychosocial needs that challenge maternal health program staff resources.

Patients

We see all this potential. I meet with so many different clients that are just full of potential and it goes nowhere.

Focus Group Participant

One of those situations when you go to their house, by the time you leave, you're just sucked dry. You wonder how anybody could get the resilience to face their day to day situations. Substance abuse is not isolated.

Focus Group Participant

Patients

- Maternal health staff must devote significant time and energy to working with patients using drugs and alcohol during pregnancy and are often frustrated by patient behaviors or desire to change.

Patients

We are their support systems. They come to us for simple questions... You can put everything in writing, but they don't comprehend. They need a professional support system.

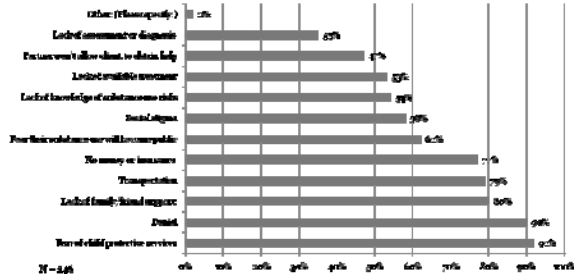
Focus Group Participant

I think I've seen her four or five times this month and have not been able to resolve not one issue in those four or five times that we've spent together."

Focus Group Participant

Patients

What prevents women from seeking help for alcohol & drug abuse during pregnancy?



Patients

They don't follow the 50% rule – I do 50%, you do 50%. They do the, I'll do what I get around to, and you do the rest.

Focus Group Participant

And, obviously, they're frustrating people to work with. Or they say they're gonna follow through – they express all this interest, and you run around ragged, and then they don't do it.

Focus Group Participant

Practice

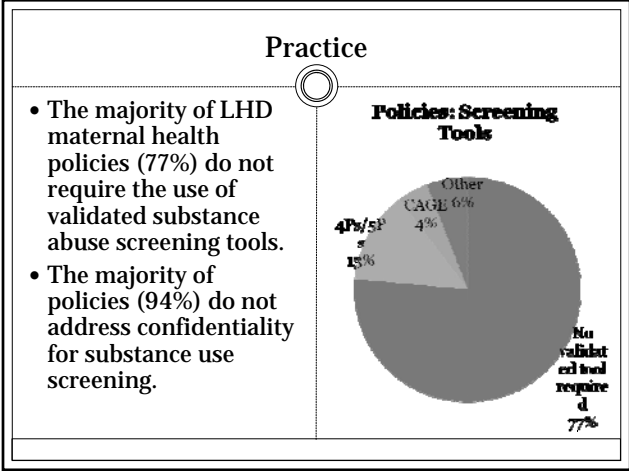
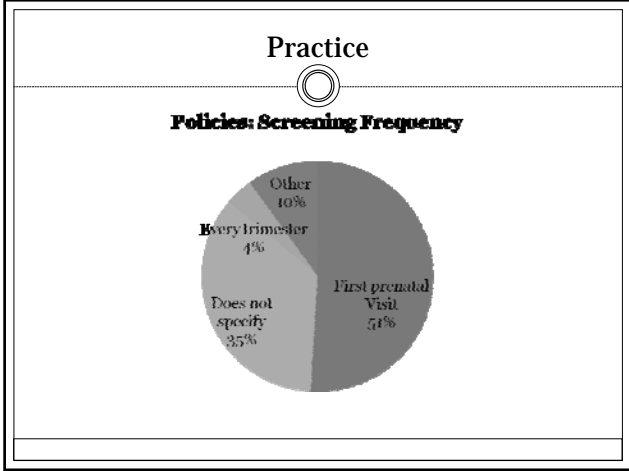
- Maternal health program substance abuse screening and intervention policies and practices vary widely across North Carolina.

Practice

- Many maternal health substance abuse policies are unclear or lack detail about procedures and protocol in the health department.

Each situation is looked at individually. There is no protocol in place.

Focus Group Participant

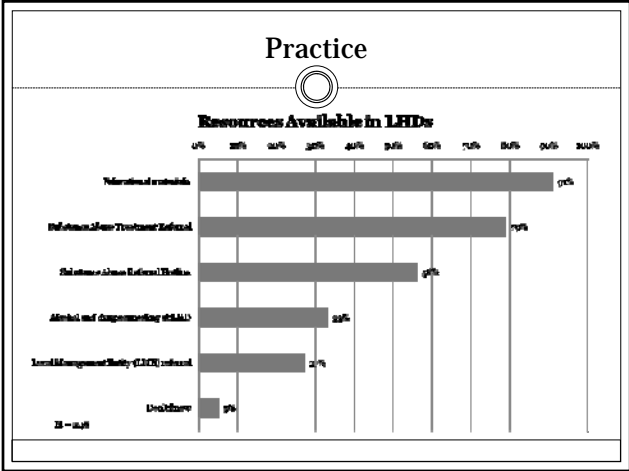


Practice

- Maternal health programs rely on education and referrals to address substance abuse with their pregnant patients but struggle to find appropriate referrals.

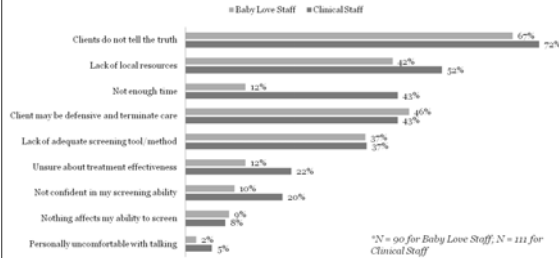
When you need help, you pretty much aren't going to get it...I have worked endless hours trying to help patients who really need help, and you can't find it. We have a broken mental health system. It's broken everywhere, but it is very, very, very broken in the rural counties.

Focus Group Participant



Practice

Local Health Department Staff: % of Respondents Reporting Barriers to Effective Practice*



Resources

- Maternal health program staff lack appropriate substance abuse treatment resources for patients.

Resources

- Many communities lack appropriate or accessible substance abuse treatment for women who are pregnant.

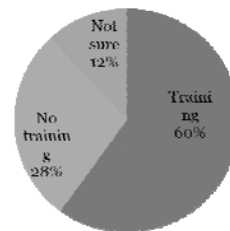
If you're going to screen, you need some place where you can refer them regardless of their income, in town, where you can send them. Otherwise you've wasted time, you've wasted money.

Focus Group Participant

- Maternal health staff struggle to find substance abuse treatment providers who accept Medicaid for Pregnant Women..

Training Need

LHD Staff Training



- More than half of all staff have received training on substance use screening.
- Staff who reported having received some training in perinatal substance use were more knowledgeable than those who had not received training

Recommendations

- The North Carolina Division of Public Health and Division of Mental Health Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services should collaborate to standardize substance abuse screening and intervention protocols in local health department maternal health programs.

Recommendations

- The North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services should work to identify and address barriers to substance abuse treatment for women who use alcohol and drugs during pregnancy.

Recommendations

- The North Carolina Division of Public Health should provide support for and training in the standardized substance abuse screening and intervention protocol via the Perinatal Substance Use Project to enhance the efficacy of local health department staff.

Thank you!

- Taylor Rush
- Jacqueline Quirk
- Dr. Jonathan Kotch
- NC Family Health Resource Line
- NC Division of Public Health Women's Health Branch

And.....



For More Information:



Perinatal Substance Use Project
Alcohol/Drug Council of North Carolina

www.nhealthystart.org/PerSubUse.htm
<http://whb.ncpublichealth.com/>

