



NEWSROOM (//WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS)



UNH Research Finds Increase in Number of Babies Born Drug Exposed in N.H.

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/RESEARCH/RESEARCH/FINDS-FINDS-FINDS-INCREASE-INCREASE-INCREASE-NUMBER-NUMBER-NUMBER-BABIES-BABIES-BABIES-BORN-BORN-BORN-DRUG-DRUG-DRUG-EXPOSED-EXPOSED-EXPOSED-NH) NH) NH)

DURHAM, N.H. – From 2005 to 2015 the number of infants diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) in the Granite State increased fivefold, from 52 to 269, according to new research by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. In 2015, newborns diagnosed with NAS remained in the hospital 12 days on average, compared to three days for newborns not born exposed.

“In 2015, 2.4 percent of New Hampshire births were diagnosed with NAS and that number is projected to rise,” said Kristin Smith, family demographer at the Carsey School and research associate professor of sociology. “This will have implications for early intervention programs, early education programs and primary schools. Pregnancy is a time to reach out to mothers as they are more receptive to services and making a change.”

Because mothers using opioids are often also using other substances like alcohol, cigarettes, and other illicit drugs as well as confronting issues related to mental health, poverty, homelessness and domestic violence that complicate recovery, Smith advocated for comprehensive policies and programs.

“Policies and procedures should not consider opioid addiction in isolation, but rather as one interconnected symptom within a larger context,” she said. “Both alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy have proven negative health consequences for children, and the adverse effects are magnified when combined with opiates. Getting mothers on a path to recovery is a formidable challenge facing our state but one that ultimately will help children and promote family unity.”

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center launched one of the first programs in the state to address the need for access to treatment for pregnant women using opiates. The integrated model has been successful with fewer than 25 percent of infants born to program participants requiring treatment and a decrease of three days in the average length of hospital stay for the newborns requiring treatment.

Smith also found that a recent change to the state’s Child Protection Act may have a “chilling effect on women seeking prenatal care, their willingness to disclose during pregnancy and reporting by providers.” The change was intended to give the Department of Children, Youth and Families discretion and encourage treatment as a way to keep families together when possible.

The report can be found here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/opioid-nas-nh> (<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/opioid-nas-nh>). It was funded by New Futures Kids Count.

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

Media Contact

Erika Mantz (/unhtoday/contributor/erika-mantz) | Communications and Public Affairs | erika.mantz@unh.edu (mailto:erika.mantz@unh.edu)

LATEST NEWS

UNH Finds Angel Investor Market on the Rise in 2020 (/unhtoday/news/release/2021/05/19/unh-finds-angel-investor-market-rise-2020)
May 19, 2021

Media Advisory: University of New Hampshire 2020 and 2021 Commencements (/unhtoday/news/release/2021/05/18/media-advisory-university-new-hampshire-2020-and-2021-commencements)
May 18, 2021

UNH Research Estimates 1.4 Million Children Have Yearly Violence-Related Medical Visits (/unhtoday/news/release/2021/05/12/unh-research-estimates-14-million-children-have-yearly-violence-related)
May 12, 2021

UNH RIFC 50 Franchise Index Surges in Q1 With Red Robin, Avis and Joint Chiropractic (/unhtoday/news/release/2021/05/11/unh-rifc-50-franchise-index-surges-q1-red-robin-avis-and-joint-chiropractic)
May 11, 2021

UNH Partners with Smuttynose Brewing Co. on New Lager (/unhtoday/news/release/2021/05/10/unh-partners-smuttynose-brewing-co-new-lager)
May 10, 2021

VIEW ALL >

✉ SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY (HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/MAIN/UNH-TODAY-SUBSCRIPTION)



University of New Hampshire (https://www.unh.edu)

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of UNH Communications and Public Affairs. (https://www.unh.edu/cpa)

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu (mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu). (mailto:unh.today@unh.edu)

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION > CONTACT US >



(https://www.linkedin.com/edu/university-of-new-



hampshire-

(http://https://www.linkedin.com/edu/university-of-new-hampshire-feeds)

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234

Copyright © 2021 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

USNH Privacy Policies (http://www.usnh.edu/legal/privacy.shtml) • USNH Terms of Use (http://www.usnh.edu/legal/tou.shtml) • ADA Acknowledgement (http://www.unh.edu/about/ada.html)