



Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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Gov. Holcomb & Community Health announce new program to prevent and treat drug addiction in moms and babies

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric J. Holcomb joined state and local leaders today at Community Hospital East to announce a new Community Health Network program designed to address opioid use disorder in mothers and to treat babies born addicted to opioids.

The Community Health Network Neonatal Opioid Addiction Project was made possible through a \$570,516 grant from the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration's (FSSA) Department of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA). The grant was created in 2017 legislation to address maternal opioid use disorder and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). NAS is the technical term used for the medical condition experienced by babies born addicted to drugs.

“Supporting mothers and babies impacted by addiction helps us attack the opioid crisis and reduce infant mortality,” Gov. Holcomb said. “This new program at Community Hospital East will save lives and give more Hoosier moms and babies access to treatment and ultimately better health.”

Community Health Network Foundation, the not-for-profit philanthropic organization of Community, is the fiscal agent for the new program. It will start at Community Hospital East with the ultimate goal of expanding to additional Community facilities by December 31, 2018.

“I have never met someone who wants an addiction,” said Bryan Mills, President and CEO of Community Health Network. “In our work to combat opioid addiction among expectant mothers, our goal is simple – healthier mothers and healthier babies. At Community, we believe we can achieve that by offering compassionate care in a comprehensive and collaborative way. Support from the State will bolster our efforts and help to devise evidence-based best practices that can be replicated across Indiana for the benefit of Hoosier women and children.”

Goals of Community's Neonatal Opioid Addiction Project include:

- Conducting screenings for all expectant mothers to identify those who need support for depression or drug use
- Caring for expectant mothers who test positive for opioids throughout their pregnancies and after their children are born
- Offering specialized care for newborns exposed to addictive substances
- Developing a Maternal and Neonatal Center of Excellence for the Treatment of Drug Use Symptoms (TODUS)
- Enhancing data collection, analysis and reporting on health outcomes, costs and best practices as well as ways to identify and remove barriers to addiction treatment and recovery

This project builds upon the success of an Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) pilot project at Community Hospital East. In 2015, the hospital became one of four statewide to pilot an ISDH program to identify and treat pregnant mothers and babies with substance use disorders.

The results were encouraging. In 2016, 45.95 percent of the hospital's drug screens for expectant mothers were positive. By the time those mothers who tested positive came back to the hospital to deliver their babies, 55 percent of them tested negative for drug use.

Yet, there is more work to be done. Every 15 minutes, a child is born in the U.S. addicted to opioids. From 1999 to 2013, the nation saw a 300 percent increase in NAS. These babies spend five times longer in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit than babies born with no substance dependency.

Gov. Holcomb made attacking the drug epidemic and increasing treatment access for people with substance use disorder one of the five pillars of his Next Level Agenda. Promoting programs like these for moms and babies is an important piece of this comprehensive approach to fighting the opioid crisis.

Learn more at in.gov/recovery.