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Governor Christie Announces \$5 Million Award For Treatment For Pregnant Women And New Moms Addicted To Opioids

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced the award of \$5 million in new contracts to expand integrated substance abuse treatment and medical care for pregnant woman and new mothers who are addicted to heroin and other opioids.

The effort follows up on multiple initiatives the Governor launched in September to combat the state's opioid crisis. Through the competitive contracts, the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) will provide funding to expand residential and outpatient treatment programs and recovery options for pregnant women, new mothers and babies.

"There has been a significant rise in the number of infants who have been exposed to opioids, such as heroin or prescription pain killers," Governor Christie said. "It is imperative that we give these babies a fair start on life and ensure mothers get the treatment they need to restore their physical and psychological health. This approach to treatment of pregnant women and new mothers in a specialized, integrated program will promote long-term recovery while offering ongoing medical care and support services."

The contracts – funded within the \$200 million in new addiction spending announced in September by Governor Chris Christie - are expected to roll out in early December and continue until June 30, 2018. They are expected to provide residential treatment for at least 882 women.

The agencies awarded the contracts in the competitive bidding process were: The Center for Great Expectations Inc. in Somerset, \$786,524; Capital Health System, \$989,086; Eva's Village Inc., \$1.1 million; Robins Nest in Glassboro, \$635,286; and Cooper Health System, \$1.5 million.

The programs will serve women in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Ocean, Salem, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset, and Passaic counties.

Under Governor Christie's leadership, New Jersey has responded to the state's opioid crisis with several innovative initiatives, including the development and expansion Recovery Coaches, Recovery Housing, medication-assisted treatment, Narcan distribution, Drug Court, peer programs, and prescription monitoring.

"Getting help for substance abuse benefits both the mother and the baby," Acting DOH Commissioner Christopher Rinn said. "During pregnancy, addiction treatment can mean the difference between having a healthy child and losing a baby or giving birth to an infant with severe developmental challenges."

Since 2011, New Jersey has seen between 500 and 630 addicted babies born each year with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). Within 24-72 hours after birth, newborns with NAS can experience severe withdrawal symptoms. They may also have a higher risk of premature death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The type of services offered through the program promotes the integration of behavioral and primary healthcare that Governor Christie intended when he transferred the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) DMHAS last month from the Department of Human Services to DOH, noted DOH Acting Deputy Commissioner of Integrated Health Services, Carolyn Daniels.

In addition to participating in a residential treatment program and focusing on relapse prevention, women who participate in the program will have access to a psychosocial support system of doctors, nurses, therapists, social

workers and others in recovery, referrals to obstetricians and nutritionists and services for housing, transportation, childcare job preparation.

“This is really a one-stop model of treatment that is designed to address many of the various issues that can deter a mother from sustained recovery,” Rinn said.

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