



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 19, 2014

Health Recovery Services Awarded \$600,000 Grant to Advance Care for Opiate-Dependent Mothers, Newborns

(ATHENS) – The State of Ohio has awarded Health Recovery Services (HRS) \$600,000 in grant funding to reduce lengthy hospital stays and promote improved health outcomes for mothers who are dependent on heroin, or other opiates, and their newborn babies. The award, part of the Maternal Opiate Medical Support (M.O.M.S.) initiative championed by the Kasich Administration, will bolster local efforts to mitigate the effects of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).

“In the midst of Ohio’s opiate epidemic, it is easy to forget that there are some individuals who are experiencing the effects of this addiction who never chose to use drugs – babies born to mothers who are dependent on opiates,” said Tracy Plouck, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, whose agency is partnering with the Governor’s Office of Health Transformation and the Ohio Department of Medicaid to find four pilot programs statewide. “It is important to give children the best start in life that we can, and the M.O.M.S. project gives us an opportunity to do just that.”

In addition to connecting expecting mothers to outpatient counseling and medication-assisted treatment (MAT), the Athens pilot project will also support a limited amount of non-clinical services. The program, which anticipates serving at least 90 women over the life of the grant, is designed to give the mothers both choice and convenience.

Patients will have options as to where to obtain medical care, drug addiction treatment and ancillary services. Health Recovery Services has partnered with OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital Athens Medical Associates Obstetrics and Gynecology, University Medical Associates, Integrated Services of Appalachian Ohio and the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine Office of Community Health Program’s Family Navigator/Pathways Program to help make the program as accessible as possible for women throughout Athens and surrounding areas.

“Ohio Medicaid is committed to identifying and supporting initiatives that lead to healthier outcomes for newborns and young mothers,” said John McCarthy, director of the Ohio Department of Medicaid. “We are pleased to collaborate with OHT and OhioMHAS to assist our local partners in their efforts to build healthier communities across our state.”

-more-

M.O.M.S. Pilot Project, cont.

NAS commonly results in lengthy neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) stays as babies are born experiencing withdrawal symptoms, respiratory complications, low birth weight, feeding difficulties and seizures.

The M.O.M.S. project is a \$4.2 million program supported by a \$2.1 million investment from the Health Transformation Innovation Fund, which is administered by the Office of Health Transformation. The Fund focuses on requests that advance Ohio's health system modernization strategies and create a return on investment for taxpayers while improving overall health system performance. The balance of the project will be funded from Medicaid dollars. The M.O.M.S. project builds upon and uses data resulting from the Ohio Children's Hospitals Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome research project funded by a Health Transformation Innovation Fund award of \$1 million in 2012.

Pilot programs have also been established in Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus. The projects will be evaluated, and best practices will be developed and implemented statewide. By engaging expecting mothers in a combination of counseling, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and case management, the three-year project is estimated to reduce infant hospital stays by 30 percent.

For more information about the M.O.M.S. initiative, visit:

<http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=671>

#

Contact:

Eric Wandersleben, Director of Media Relations and Outreach, OhioMHAS

Eric.Wandersleben@mha.ohio.gov | 614.728.5090