

DECEMBER 2023

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# Public Health Approaches to Perinatal Substance Use

Special Issue of the *Maternal  
and Child Health Journal*

PROMOTIONAL TOOLKIT

**AMCHP**  
ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

**astho**<sup>™</sup>

# Foreward

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Maternal and Child Health Stakeholders,

Almost one in four pregnancy-related deaths is attributed to mental health conditions, including substance use disorder (SUD), making them the leading underlying cause of pregnancy-related deaths. Rising rates of overdose deaths, fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, have exacerbated concerns about perinatal SUD. Now is a critical time to invest in the health and wellness of perinatal people with SUD and their families.

This [special issue](#) of the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* builds on the evidence base by featuring 21 open-access articles highlighting the latest research, programs, and policy initiatives in perinatal SUD. Notably, the articles highlight tangible program and policy approaches to preventing and mitigating the harms of perinatal substance use and improving maternal and child health.

The [Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs](#) (AMCHP) and the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#) (ASTHO) sponsored the special issue with funding from the [Maternal and Child Health Bureau](#) within the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. The special issue is a capstone of the PRISM (Promoting Innovation in State and Territorial MCH Policymaking) project led by AMCHP and ASTHO.

We thank the authors for their work on perinatal SUD to further the conversation and strengthen the evidence base to continue forging a path forward. The authors identify five strategic directions to generate new lines of inquiry and scale up evidence-based programs and policies:

1. Assess the State of Perinatal Behavioral Health
2. Build a Diverse and Culturally Competent Perinatal Behavioral Health Workforce
3. Integrate Perinatal and Behavioral Health Care Services
4. Advance Non-Punitive and Harm Reduction Approaches
5. Facilitate Change by Strengthening Systems of Care for Perinatal People with Substance Use Disorder

Improving outcomes for perinatal people with SUD requires collective action. This special issue is a call to the public health community and maternal and child advocates to address perinatal SUD through a compassionate, holistic wellness lens for birthing people and families.



AMANI ECHOLS  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs,

on behalf of the Guest Editorial Board:

Amani Echols, *Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs*

Stacy Collins, *Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs*

Sanaa Akbarali, *Association of State and Territorial Health Officials*

Ramya Dronamraju, *Association of State and Territorial Health Officials*

Keriann Uesugi, *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau*

# Inclusive and Non-Stigmatizing Language When Talking About Perinatal SUD

Pregnant people who use substances often experience more stigma than non-pregnant people who use substances because of the potential for impacting the fetus. This frequently calls into question maternal fitness and may lead to punitive responses. Our language can reinforce or deconstruct the stigmatizing narratives of pregnant and parenting people who use substances.

The guest editorial board strove for each manuscript to use person-centered, strengths-based language to avoid reinforcing negative biases and stigma of perinatal people who use substances. Person-centered language puts the person before their mental health or medical condition and respects every individual's dignity, worth, unique qualities, and strengths (e.g., “person with substance use disorder” instead of “addict”). Using terms with negative connotations was also discouraged, such as “drug” and “relapse.” Instead, “substance” and “return to use” were preferred.

To acknowledge non-binary pregnant and parenting people, we strongly recommended that authors use gender-inclusive terms such as birthing persons, perinatal people, pregnant people, parenting people, human milk, and breast/chestfeeding.

To learn more, please explore the following resources on person-centered, non-stigmatizing language when writing about perinatal mental health and substance use disorders:

- [Addictionary](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)

**We hope that the promotion of the special issue will include inclusive and non-stigmatizing language.**



# Toolkit Contents

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The Social Media Toolkit for the special issue provides shareable messages, images, and practical resources. This toolkit includes:

## Social Media Messaging

- Key Messages
- Hashtags
- Follow Us

## Email Dissemination

- Partner Email Template
- Newsletter Template

## Social Media Graphics

- Shareable Images

## Resources

- PRISM Virtual Learning Sessions
- AMCHP Resources
- ASTHO Resources
- Need Help?

## IMPORTANT LINKS

- Read the special issue:  
<https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD>
- Register to attend the journal unveiling event on Tuesday, December 19 at 12:30 PM ET:  
<bit.ly/PerinatalSUD>
- Access the social media graphics here: <bit.ly/MCHJPromoGraphics>

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions, please contact Amani Echols at [aechols@amchp.org](mailto:aechols@amchp.org).

# Social Media Messages

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## Key Messages

DOWNLOAD THE GRAPHICS

### SPECIAL ISSUE

🔔 New resource alert! [tag respective AMCHP social media handle] & @ASTHO published a special issue of the Maternal and Child Health Journal on Public Health Approaches to Perinatal Substance Use. The special issue features innovative solutions to address perinatal SUD. [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD

[insert graphic]

🔔 Exciting News! [tag respective AMCHP social media handle] & @ASTHO's special issue of the MCH Journal on public health approaches to address #PerinatalSUD is out now. Delve into cutting-edge research shaping the future of maternal and child health: [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD #ImpactPerinatalSUD

[insert graphic]

👏 Join us in celebrating the launch of [tag respective AMCHP social media handle] & @ASTHO's special issue of the MCH Journal! Learn how innovative public health programs & policies are making a difference in addressing #PerinatalSUD. [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD #ImpactPerinatalSUD

[insert graphic]

Every pregnant person deserves the best care possible. [tag respective AMCHP social media handle] and @ASTHO's special issue of the MCH Journal showcases innovative public health programs and policies that are paving the way to support people impacted by #PerinatalSUD. [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD

[insert graphic]

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### JOURNAL UNVEILING EVENT

You're invited to join [tag respective AMCHP social media handle] and @ASTHO's event celebrating the release of their special issue of the MCH Journal, dedicated to advancing #PerinatalSUD research and solutions. Register to attend on Tuesday, December 19 at 12:30 PM ET: [bit.ly/PerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/PerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD

[insert graphic]



# Social Media Messages

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DOWNLOAD THE GRAPHICS

LAUNCH EVENT CONTINUED

🌟 Join [\[tag respective AMCHP social media handle\]](#) and @ASTHO for a notable event to unveil the insights in #PerinatalSUD programs and policies discussed in the latest special issue of the MCH Journal! Register to attend on Tuesday, December 19 at 12:30 PM ET: [bit.ly/PerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/PerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD

*[insert graphic]*

💛 Join experts, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, providers, and advocates at [\[tag respective AMCHP social media handle\]](#) & @ASTHO's launch event! Together, we'll explore cutting-edge research and policies highlighted in the special issue of the MCH Journal on #PerinatalSUD. [bit.ly/PerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/PerinatalSUD)

*[insert graphic]*

🌟 Your presence can make a difference! Join [\[tag respective AMCHP social media handle\]](#) and @ASTHO at the launch event for the special issue of the MCH Journal, where we'll discuss how to drive change and improve #PerinatalSUD care. Register today! [bit.ly/PerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/PerinatalSUD) #MCHJPerinatalSUD #ImpactPerinatalSUD

*[insert graphic]*

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## FACTS AND FINDINGS

According to @CDCgov, almost 1 in 4 pregnancy-related deaths are attributed to mental health conditions, including substance use disorder. The #MCHJPerinatalSUD special issue, led by [\[tag respective AMCHP social media handle\]](#) & @ASTHO, offers solutions to address this issue. Read more: [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD)

*[insert graphic]*

The #MCHJPerinatalSUD special issue, sponsored by [\[tag respective AMCHP social media handle\]](#) & @ASTHO, calls for increased public health approaches to address polysubstance use, substance use in the postpartum period, & addressing root causes. Learn more here: [bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD](https://bit.ly/MCHJPerinatalSUD) #PerinatalSUDResearch

*[insert graphic]*



# Social Media Messages

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## *NEED HELP?*

You're Not Alone. Being a parent can be hard. If you need someone to talk to, call or text the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline at 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262) any time. It's free and confidential. #MaternalMentalHealth #TLCMAMA

You're Not Alone. If you need someone to talk to, call or text 988 or chat <http://988Lifeline.org>. It's free and confidential. #MentalHealth #988

## **Hashtags**

- #AMCHPMentalHealth
- #MCHJPerinatalSUD
- #PerinatalSUD
- #ImpactPerinatalSUD
- #PerinatalSUDResearch

## **Follow and Tag Us**

### *AMCHP*

- Twitter @DC\_AMCHP
- LinkedIn @Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Instagram @amchp\_dc
- Facebook @AMCHP
- Website: [amchp.org](http://amchp.org)

### *ASTHO*

- Twitter @ASTHO
- LinkedIn @Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Facebook @ASTHO
- Website: [astho.org](http://astho.org)

### *SPRINGER PUBLIC HEALTH*

- Twitter @SpringerPBH
- 

# Email Dissemination

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## PARTNER EMAIL TEMPLATE

**Subject Line:** *JUST RELEASED: Special Issue on Perinatal Substance Use in the MCH Journal (December 2023)*

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

The [Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs \(AMCHP\)](#) and the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials \(ASTHO\)](#) are pleased to announce the release of a special issue of the Maternal and Child Health Journal on [public health approaches to perinatal substance use](#).

## **DECEMBER 2023 SPECIAL ISSUE: PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES TO PERINATAL SUBSTANCE USE**

The December 2023 special issue of the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* features 21 open-access articles focusing on the latest research, programs, and policy initiatives related to perinatal substance use. Notably, the articles highlight tangible program and policy approaches to preventing and mitigating the harms of perinatal substance use and improving maternal and child health.

**Please join AMCHP and ASTHO on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 12:30 pm ET/9:30 am PT for a [virtual forum to unveil the special issue](#).** The event will feature remarks by leaders from AMCHP, ASTHO, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration. A select group of authors from the special issue will present their work and engage in enriching discussion.

Please visit AMCHP's [social media toolkit](#) to access sample posts, graphics, and more to share across your networks and social media channels.

For inquiries, please contact Amani Echols at [aechols@amchp.org](mailto:aechols@amchp.org).



# Email Dissemination

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## NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE

**Header:** *Maternal and Child Health Journal Special Issue: Public Health Approaches to Perinatal Substance Use*

The [Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs](#) (AMCHP) and the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#) (ASTHO) are pleased to announce the release of a special issue of the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* on [public health approaches to perinatal substance use](#).

The **December 2023 special issue of the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* features 21 open-access articles** focusing on the latest research, programs, and policy initiatives related to perinatal substance use. **Please join AMCHP and ASTHO on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 12:30 pm ET/9:30 am PT for a virtual forum to unveil the special issue.** The event will feature remarks by leaders from AMCHP, ASTHO, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration. A select group of authors from the special issue will present their work and engage in enriching discussion.

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For inquiries, please contact Amani Echols at [aechols@amchp.org](mailto:aechols@amchp.org).



# Social Media Graphics

You can access and download the graphics via this [folder](#).

## SHAREABLE IMAGES



# Resources

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## PRISM Virtual Learning Sessions

- Perinatal Substance Use: National and State Public Health Strategies
- Making the Call for MCH: Exploring the Maternal Mental Health Hotline and the 988 Crisis Lifeline
- Implementing the “Care for Pregnant and Postpartum People with Substance Use Disorder” Patient Safety Bundle: Opportunities for State Public Health
- Incorporating Equity into Peer Recovery Services: Examples and Considerations
- Integrating Mental and Primary Care for Perinatal People
- Supporting the Maternal Behavioral Health Workforce
- Addressing Mental Health in BIPOC Communities: Key Cultural Considerations for MCH
- Innovative Approaches to Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Care During COVID-19
- Telehealth Approaches for Treating SUD in Maternal and Child Populations
- Words Matter: The Use of Language in Destigmatizing Mental Illness
- Maternal Mental Health Systems Change & IMD Exclusion Waivers
- Universal Screening and Testing of Pregnant Women

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## AMCHP Resources

### *ISSUE BRIEFS AND FACT SHEETS*

- Issue Brief: Perinatal Cannabis Use in the Era of Increasing Legalization: Considerations for State MCH Programs
  - Fact Sheet: National Mental Health Hotlines
  - Issue Brief: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for Pregnant and Postpartum Women: Opportunities for State MCH Programs
  - Issue Brief: Promoting Access to Care for Women of Reproductive Age with Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders in Rural Communities
  - Issue Brief: Housing as Platform for Treatment and Recovery: Opportunities for Title V at the Intersection of Stable Housing, Mental Health, and Substance Use
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# Resources

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## AMCHP Resources Continued

### *INTERACTIVE TOOLS*

- State Harm Reduction Strategies: Improving Outcomes for Reproductive-Aged Women Who Use Substances

### *MCH BRIDGES PODCAST*

- Episode #7: What's Public Health Got to Do With It? Maternal Health, Substance Use, and the Criminal Justice System
  - Episode #10: Queering Perinatal Mental Health
- 

## ASTHO Resources

### *ISSUE BRIEFS AND BLOGS*

- States Aim to Improve Outcomes for People Experiencing Substance Use During Pregnancy
- Utilizing Doula Care to Support Substance Use Disorder in the Postpartum Period
- States Explore the Relationship Between Partner Violence and Substance Use Disorders
- Evidence-Informed Substance Use Disorder Policies for Maternal and Child Populations
- Medication-Assisted Treatment in Pregnancy
- Preventing Fatal Overdoses in Postpartum Populations
- Beyond Opioids: Tobacco and other drug use among pregnant women
- Stigma Reinforces Barriers to Care for Pregnant and Postpartum Women with Substance Use Disorder

### *INTERACTIVE TOOLS*

- Harm Reduction Legal Mapping

### *TRAINING*

- Perinatal Opioid Use Training
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# Resources

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## ASTHO Resources Continued

### *PUBLIC HEALTH REVIEW PODCAST*

- Substance Use During Pregnancy - Reducing Stigma of Treatment
  - COVID-19 and the Fourth Trimester
  - Ecosystem of Care: Providing Behavioral Health Services to Pregnant Women
- 

## Need Help?

### *NATIONAL MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE*

Are you a new parent and feeling sad, worried, overwhelmed, or concerned that you aren't good enough? You aren't alone. You aren't to blame. With help, you can feel better. *Call or text 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)* to connect with counselors at the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline.

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline provides 24/7, free, confidential support, resources and referrals to any pregnant and postpartum mothers facing mental health challenges and their loved ones. The service is available via phone and text in English or Spanish. Learn more about the [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#).

988

People can call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. 988 serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help. 988 offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress such as thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, and emotional distress.





## FUNDING

This special issue was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration under grant number U1XMC31656.

## DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this publication are solely the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Health Resources and Services Administration, nor does mention of the department or agency names imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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