



## NEWS RELEASE

### Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Dr. Courtney N. Phillips  
HHS Executive Commissioner

**Date:** Dec. 20, 2019  
**Contact:** Christine Mann, 512-424-6951  
Christine.Mann@hhsc.state.tx.us

#### **Texas Awarded Funding to Help Pregnant and Postpartum Women Affected by Opioid Use Disorders in Houston**

AUSTIN – Texas Health and Human Services was awarded \$750,000 in federal funding to help increase access to treatment for pregnant and postpartum women with opioid use disorders and who are in the Medicaid program.

“We’re helping pregnant women, who are among the most vulnerable group of Texans in the opioid crisis, get access to the care they need,” said Stephanie Muth, State Medicaid Director. “This innovative project will foster a more effective approach to treatment and care for expectant and postpartum mothers with substance use disorders.”

Texas was one of 10 states selected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement a new model of integrated care to increase access to treatment and improve outcomes for postpartum and expectant mothers with an opioid use disorder who are enrolled in Medicaid.

HHS is partnering with Harris Health System’s Ben Taub Hospital and Santa Maria Hostel to implement the Maternal Opioid Misuse model of care in the Houston area in January 2020. The partnership will provide training to health care providers for universal screening and referral of pregnant women at-risk for substance use disorders. It will also leverage hospital and community outreach efforts to engage women earlier in their pregnancies and foster integrated care which includes health care, behavioral health and wraparound services. In 2021, HHS and its partners will establish a multidisciplinary clinic designed to lessen stigma, reduce barriers to prenatal care and improve the quality of maternal care for women with substance use disorders.

“We are excited about the opportunity to work on this program with HHSC, Harris Health, Baylor College of Medicine and Santa Maria Hostel,” said Dr. Carey Eppes, Chief of Obstetrics and Maternal Medical Director at Ben Taub Hospital. “This will help further our efforts to improve access and continuity of care for pregnant women with opioid disorders.”

Opioid use in pregnant and postpartum women contributes to maternal mortality and poor health outcomes as well as preterm birth, low birth weight and neonatal abstinence syndrome in newborns. Engaging women earlier in their pregnancies by providing coordinated and integrated care such as medication assisted treatment, prenatal care, primary care and mental health services improves the health of women and their babies.

This five-year cooperative funding agreement with the CMS will allow the state to invest \$750,000 in the first year of the project. Additional federal funding for the next two-to-five years will be based on the state's performance. If all milestones and performance goals are met, Texas could receive up to \$5 million in federal funds over the five-year period to combat the opioid crisis.

The goals of the project are consistent with the [Texas Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health \(AIM\) Obstetric Care for Women with Opioid Use Disorder patient safety bundle](#).

More information on the MOM model is available on the [CMS website](#).