

PRESS RELEASE

The American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG), District II

100 Great Oaks Boulevard, Suite 109, Albany, NY 12203
518-436-3461 / info@ny.acog.org

Christa R. Christakis, MPP
Executive Director

Embargoed until Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 8am, EST

CONTACT: Christa Christakis (518) 436-3461/cchristakis@ny.acog.org

Women's Health Care Providers in New York State Highlight Strategies to Address Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy

Albany, NY – November 14, 2017 – The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District II released its white paper that aims to provide New York State communities and health care providers with the tools to manage and reduce opioid use disorder in pregnancy.

The white paper, "**Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy; Actionable Strategies to Improve Management and Outcomes in New York State**," is the result of a statewide summit held earlier this year to develop key health care provider and public health recommendations specifically related to the opioid crisis and the care of pregnant women.

"Pregnancy provides an ideal opportunity to identify and treat women with opioid use disorder and reduce potentially negative health outcomes for both the mother and her child," said **Leah Kaufman, MD, FACOG**, Residency Program Director and Vice Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York and Co-Chair of the ACOG District II Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy Task Force. "While there has been a lot of attention paid to the opioid crisis overall, we felt we needed to identify the specific challenges and propose solutions associated with caring for pregnant patients with opioid use disorder and put those recommendations into action."

This white paper is part of ACOG District II's broader initiative, funded by the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth), to develop educational materials for women's health care providers to be released in 2018 about comprehensive management of pregnant women with opioid use disorder. At this time, significant obstacles exist for providers in identifying, treating and managing opioid use disorder in pregnant patients given the lack of accessible education and implementation tools available. The recommendations in the white paper will inform the development of ACOG District II's toolkit to help women's health care providers be better equipped to effectively and compassionately support this vulnerable population.

"As a provider trained to prescribe buprenorphine to pregnant patients struggling with addiction, I believe this white paper highlights key solutions that could help women's health care providers across the state better care for our patients and encourage more providers to become buprenorphine prescribers," said **David Garry, DO, FACOG**, Co-Chair of the

ACOG District II Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy Task Force and Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology at Stony Brook University School of Medicine in Stony Brook, New York. "Just receiving buprenorphine training is not sufficient. More mentorship opportunities for providers are needed for them to be fully successful."

Key recommendations from the white paper include:

- **Recommendation 1: Change perceptions of opioid use disorder through the use of a common language**
- **Recommendation 2: Develop and offer multifaceted education and implementation tools to better assist women's health care providers in caring for pregnant women with opioid use disorder**
- **Recommendation 3: Create better engagement and communication among providers within the continuum of care and across service areas, including the justice system**
- **Recommendation 4: Enhance patient and family engagement**

ACOG District II and New York State are aligning efforts to participate as one of 14 states in the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) National Collaborative on Maternal Opioid Use Disorder, which launched today in Washington, D.C. New York will also be joining AIM, the overarching national alliance which is a data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative that aims to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity through the development of consistent maternity care practices for common pregnancy-related conditions.

The challenges and strategies outlined in the white paper only scratch the surface of the problem and require the commitment of health care providers, public health professionals, policymakers, the public, and patients to advocate on behalf of women battling opioid use disorder in pregnancy in New York State. As the educational and scientific resource on women's health care, ACOG District II encourages organizations and policy makers to utilize ACOG as a resource and to partner and work together to effectively support women and families.

#####

ACOG District II represents over 4,000 board-certified obstetrician-gynecologists who deliver health care to New York's women.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of more than 58,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion organization. www.acog.org

Follow us

