



POSITION STATEMENT

Addiction in Pregnancy

Recognizing that substance use in pregnancy is a disease that requires a team approach to treatment, the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) supports legislation that:

- Protects the rights of women with addictions so that they may seek health care without fear of criminal retribution.
- Encourages the development of public health programs that address innovative interventions to treat addictions in pregnancy.
- Promotes education and research into this significant public health issue.

Substance use in pregnancy is common, exceeding eighteen percent.¹ Substance addiction is the persistent compulsive use of a substance known to be physically, psychologically, or socially harmful, including tobacco, alcohol, prescription medications, and illicit drugs. In pregnancy, addiction to one or more of these substances constitutes a significant health problem for both mother and baby.

ACNM supports a health care system in which women with substance addictions in pregnancy are treated with compassion, not punishment. Women should not be deterred from seeking care during pregnancy due to fear of prosecution. Optimal care for women with addiction occurs within a multidisciplinary environment in which holistic care is provided that considers the context of her social environment and her unique health risks.^{2,3} In the health policy and legislative arena, efforts should be directed towards comprehensive approaches to promoting addiction recovery.⁴

References

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2. Flavin J & Paltrow LM (2010) Punishing pregnant drug-using women: defying law, medicine and common sense. *Journal of Addictive Diseases* 29: 231-244.
3. Guttmacher Institute (2012) Substance abuse during pregnancy. State Policies in Brief. New York, NY. http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_SADP.pdf
4. National Advocates for Pregnant Women. <http://advocatesforpregnantwomen.org/>

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