

Encouraging Healthy Choices for Pregnant Women in the State Prison System

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
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**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division**

Faculty

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Program Objectives

- **To provide a general overview of women in the prison system**
- **To provide information on special programs and services available to pregnant inmates**
- **To share information on the Women's Health Information for the Incarcerated Program**

Program Objectives

- **To share information on the Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project**
- **To address unhealthy risk behaviors of pregnant women**

Women in the State Prison System

- **All female offenders are initially housed at Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women**
- **Depending on their security level, they can transition to Montgomery Women's Facility and Birmingham Work Release Center for Women**

Women in the State Prison System

- **Total number of incarcerated women – 952 (as of 9/7/2010)**
- **Medical care is provided to all women**
- **Most women are convicted of drug related crimes including possession and substance misuse**

Women in the State Prison System

- Women have the opportunity to participate in drug treatment programs, educational opportunities, life enrichment classes, and receive mental health care services



Pregnant Women in the State Prison System

- Pregnant inmates are housed at Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women
- There were 41 incarcerated pregnant women identified in 2009
- OB/GYN visits are provided weekly for prenatal care by contracted physicians

Pregnant Women in the State Prison System

- All babies are delivered at Baptist South in Montgomery
- Pregnant women receive prenatal vitamins, WIC services, and are transported to the county health department for WIC appointments

Pregnant Women in the State Prison System

- Pregnant women receive double portions of food and evening snacks
- Most pregnant women go into labor and give birth while still in prison
- Very few women are released prior to the delivery date

WHI FI Program

- A collaborative partnership between the Office of Women's Health, Aid to Inmate Moms, and the Alabama Department of Corrections



WHI FI Program

- The WHI FI Initiative promotes a gender-responsive strategy to addressing the health concerns of incarcerated women
- To provide health information, education, and facilitate healthcare service referrals for women dislocated and disadvantaged due to their incarceration

WHI FI Program

- Nurturing healthy lifestyles pre and post release
- Improve the health outcomes for previously incarcerated women

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- To provide health education and intervention programs to 50 pregnant incarcerated women in the prison system through the Office of Women's Health WHI FI Program
- Timeline
 - July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- To address risk behaviors that contribute to high rates of infant mortality in incarcerated women

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Proposed project activities
 - Work with the prison social worker to identify and assess pregnant women at intake
 - Identify individual risk behavior factors that contribute to infant mortality

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Offer quarterly group education sessions on tobacco use during pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, exercise, physical activity, and mental health

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Assist pregnant women with obtaining birth certificates and providing referral linkages to services prior to release
- Provide “Healthy Lifestyles” packets to all pregnant women in the prison system

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- **Healthy Lifestyles packets**
 - Pamphlets and brochures
 - Preconception health fact sheet
 - Nutrition and healthy eating
 - Managing chronic diseases
 - Stress management and relaxation

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- **Breast and cervical cancer**
- **Substance abuse, tobacco, and alcohol use**

Pregnant Women in Prison

- **Unhealthy behaviors contributing to infant mortality during pregnancy**

Unhealthy Risk Behaviors and Habits

- **Smoking**
 - Smoking or being around others that smoke can cause your baby to be born too small or too soon to be healthy
- **Cigarettes and marijuana**



Unhealthy Risk Behaviors and Habits

- **Drinking alcohol**
 - Beer, wine, wine coolers, hard liquor, cough, and cold medicines
 - Can cause birth defects, mental retardation, and death



Unhealthy Risk Behaviors and Habits

- **Drugs and medicine**
 - Using illegal drugs and some medicines can cause miscarriage, brain damage, addiction, and death to the baby

Steps for Having A Healthy Baby

- Get a checkup to identify high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, seizures, and thyroid disease
- Make and keep your prenatal appointments
- Take prenatal vitamins with folic acid everyday weight

Steps for Having A Healthy Baby

- Don't smoke, drink, or do drugs
- Eat a healthy diet, with plenty of fruits and vegetables, drink plenty of water, and maintain a healthy weight

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project Outcomes with Pregnant Inmates

Date	# of Pregnant Women	Demographic Breakdown
9/25/2009	11	5 C / 6 AA
11/16/2009	12	5 C / 7 AA
6/4/2010	22	8 C / 14 AA
Total Participating	45	18 C / 27 AA

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Birmingham Community Based Facility for Women
- One group level education intervention occurred with women who were participating in the quarterly Pre Release/Reentry Program

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Two hour discussion on risk behaviors including tobacco use and smoking during pregnancy, the impact of drugs on the reproductive system, high blood pressure, and diabetes

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- Number of participants
 - 24
 - 18 Caucasian women
 - 6 African American women

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- **Project Partners**
 - **Aid to Inmate Mothers**
 - **Alabama Department of Corrections**
 - **Alabama Department of Public Health**
 - **Office of Minority Health**

Region IV OWH Infant Mortality Project

- **Office of Women's Health**
- **Bureau of Family Health Services**
- **Nutrition and Physical Activity Division**
- **Tobacco Prevention Branch**

Help Us Keep These Babies Alive!!!



Contact Information

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