Opioids and Pregnancy:
What Home Visitors Should Know

From 2003 to 2012, U.S. babies born dependent on drugs increased nearly five-fold.

The main cause: OPIOIDS

Prescription opioids are drugs intended for pain relief after surgery or injury.

Common prescription opioids include:
- oxycodone (or oxy)
- codeine
- morphine
- fentanyl
- hydrocodone

Heroin, an illegal street drug, is also an opioid. Sometimes use of prescription opioids progresses to heroin use.

Opioids affect the brain.
They reduce pain and feelings of worry. Opioids can also lead to a temporary feeling of numbness or intense pleasure.

Opioids are highly addictive.
Their use can lead to dependency.

Opioid misuse during pregnancy can cause serious problems for baby, including:

- Premature birth
- Stillbirth
- Cerebral Palsy
- Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)*

*This syndrome happens when opiates pass through the placenta and the baby becomes dependent on the drug, along with the mother. Signs of NAS can include body shakes, twitching, fussiness and excessive crying, poor weight gain, breathing problems, and other issues.

Opioid misuse can also harm pregnant women, causing:

- Overdose risk
- Slow breathing rate
- Hallucinations
- Nausea and vomiting
- Difficulty caring for baby

Weakened immune system*

Dependency, physical and psychological

*making it easier for mom to get sick

1 out of 20 women uses inappropriate drugs (sometimes known as "street drugs") during pregnancy.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse every 15 minutes a baby is born suffering from opioid withdrawal in the U.S.