



MDH TASK FORCE  
RECOMMENDATION 5: **CREATE A  
UNIFORM PROCESS FOR  
NOTIFICATION & REPORTING TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,  
YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AND LOCAL  
CHILD WELFARE AFTER BIRTH**

### Purpose

To highlight 2 county-led programs- Hennepin County's Project CHILD and Ramsey County's Mothers First- that take a non-punitive, harm-reduction approach to supporting pregnant and parenting people with substance use challenges.

### Why It Matters

These county-based models offer scalable examples of how child welfare and public health can collaborate to support- not punish- birthing people navigating substance use. By centering trust, lived experience, and patient-defined recovery, they demonstrate promising pathways to reduce inequity and improve outcomes for both caregivers and infants.

### Goal

Promote voluntary, supportive models of care that reduce unnecessary family separation and punitive system involvement by building trusting, trauma-informed relationships with birthing people experiencing substance use, especially those disproportionately impacted by systemic barriers.

## CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Mandatory reporting laws can deter prenatal care and discourage openness about substance use
- Limited access to culturally concordant care and peer support- especially for younger or BIPOC parents
- System mistrust and fear of CPS involvement remain barriers to seeking support
- Housing instability and lack of continuity between postpartum and long-term support

## FEATURED COUNTY PROGRAMS

### 1 **RAMSEY COUNTY- MOTHERS FIRST**

- Supports Ramsey County residents who are pregnant and/or parenting a child under 1 with history of substance use
- Voluntary model with flexible re-engagement; no removal for relapse
- Interdisciplinary team includes peer recovery support, doulas, nurses, and legal partners
- Provides home visits, holistic care, and anonymous referral process

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### 2 **HENNEPIN COUNTY- PROJECT CHILD**

- Serves pregnant individuals (16+) through harm-reduction and voluntary enrollment
- Wraparound case management, nursing support, and recovery peer services
- Works with individuals to meet their goals throughout pregnancy. At 34 weeks, participants may then begin proactive engagement with Child Protection
- Aims to reduce the risk of termination of parental rights and support postpartum stability

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## **RESOURCES SHARED:**

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### **Task Force on Pregnancy Health and Substance Use Disorder Recommendation 5:**

- **Create a uniform process for notification and reporting to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and the local child welfare after birth.**
- The task force recommends the Department of Children, Youth, and Families create a notification system that meets compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). This notification system will serve to develop a more nuanced pathway to support families with substance misuse and substance use disorders. The notification system will be separate from the Minnesota state system for reporting alleged abuse and neglect. Notifications are intended for monitoring, federal compliance, public health planning, and to create a system of support to improve care coordination and health outcomes for the parent-infant dyad.

### **Ramsey County Mothers First:**

- To make a referral:
  - Call 651-266-4111 or fill out the form [HERE](#)

### **Hennepin County Project CHILD:**

- For pregnant people- to learn more or to enroll:
  - Call 612-879-3609, email [projectchild@hennepin.us](mailto:projectchild@hennepin.us), or fill out the form [HERE](#)
- For service providers- to refer a client or to make a report:
  - Call 612-879-3609 or fill out the form [HERE](#)