Vermont’s CHARM (Children and Recovering Mothers) Team:

A collaborative approach to supporting pregnant and parenting women with opioid use disorders and their infants

Summary and Resource Links

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July 2019
What is CHARM?

- **Children and Recovering Mothers** is an inter-disciplinary and cross-agency team which coordinates care for pregnant and postpartum mothers with a history of opioid use disorder, and their babies.

- **Model collaborative approach**
  
  (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA 2016)
CHARM Goal:

to improve the health and safety outcomes of babies born to women with a history of opioid use disorder by coordinating
○ medical care,
○ substance abuse treatment,
○ child welfare, and
○ social service supports.
Key Elements of CHARM Collaboration

- **Shared Goal:** Team Members and Patients/Clients want a healthy and safe infant.

- **A Shared Philosophy:** Improving care and supports for mothers is the most important factor in helping to ensure healthy and safe infants.

- **Framework for Operation:** Shared Information across agencies improves child safety and healthy outcomes.
CHARM Key Collaborative Partners:

- Obstetric care
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- SUD/MH Treatment/Counseling
- Neonatology
- Child Welfare/Child Protective Services
- Public Health/Maternal Child Health (WIC)
- Home Health (nurse home visiting)
- TANF ("Reach Up")
- Residential: Women/Children SUD Treatment/Support
  - (Court; Corrections)
  - (Links to Developmental Screens/Services; Recovery)
Framework for Collaboration

- **Memorandum of Understanding**: framework for sharing information and coordinating services. Signed by leaders of all agencies/departments

- **Consent to Release Information**: Signed by patients

- **Vermont Law**: “Empaneled” as a multi-disciplinary “child protection” team (VSA Title 33 § 4917)

- **Infrastructure and facilitation**

- **Regular (monthly)** Team Case Review Meetings
Prenatal Care: Key Elements

- Criteria: low threshold – pregnant; opioid use disorder
- Multiple points of referral
- Pregnancy: Key opportunity for intervention
- Focus: Reduce shame and stigma
- Best practice: health and treatment of mom, family
- Provide clear and accurate information
- Respectful, non-judgmental
- Team approach – integrated services
- Cross-disciplinary continual learning
Key Patient Indicators for Success

- Start prenatal care early in pregnancy
- Initiate pharmacological treatment for opioid dependence early in pregnancy
- Engage in substance abuse treatment, counseling
- Attend prenatal care appointments
- Attend Neomedi Clinic appointments
- Family and social supports, stable housing
- Plan of safe care
- Recovery supports
DCF Policy: Assessment may begin 30 days before due date, where:
- serious threat to a child’s health or safety,
- mother’s substance abuse during third trimester

Innovative approach:
- Allows time for family engagement prior to birth
- Focus: planning for safe environment for the infant
- Child maltreatment prevention: earlier indication of risk/parent is unable to parent safely
- Avoid unnecessary placement crisis at birth
Family Supports

- Home Health – nurse home visiting
- Residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment for moms and babies
- Economic: WIC, TANF, 3Squares
- Peer support – New Moms in Recovery
- Parenting education
- Children’s services: developmental screen
- Emergency needs, incentives
The Children and Recovering Mothers (CHARM) Collaborative in Burlington, VT: A Case Study
National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

Vermont Health Department - Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs: Care Alliance for Opioid Addiction
http://healthvermont.gov/adap/treatment/

Hub and Spoke Model:
https://blueprintforhealth.vermont.gov/about-blueprint/hub-and-spoke

University of VT - VCHIP: Improving Care for Opioid-exposed Newborns (ICON)
https://www.med.uvm.edu/vchip/icon
CHARM Outcomes

- “Anything that drives pregnant women with opioid use disorder from seeking treatment results in more prematurity, higher infant mortality, less probability of successful parenting”

- Health of Baby depends on the mother’s health, the family’s health!

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