



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WAYS TO PREVENT PRENATAL DRUG USE AND MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME; AND REQUIRING THAT FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, babies who are exposed to certain drugs in the womb, including opioids, may suffer the effects of withdrawal in a condition known as neonatal abstinence syndrome; and

WHEREAS, these infants often are also at risk for low birth weights or other complications at birth; and

WHEREAS, a recent National Institute on Drug Abuse analysis concluded that the incidence of neonatal substance abuse increased five-fold from 2004 to 2014; and

WHEREAS, the same analysis showed that \$563 million was spent in 2014 to treat 32,000 babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, with more than 80% of those costs paid through state Medicaid programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Montana State Health Assessment by the Department of Public Health and Human Services reported that the rate of neonatal abstinence syndrome births in Montana increased from 1.7 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 8.6 per 1,000 live births in 2015; and

WHEREAS, drug use during pregnancy may result in the need not only for specialized health care services but also in an increased need for social services, including foster care services for drug-exposed children.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to study best practices for reducing opioid and other drug use by pregnant women and the occurrence of neonatal abstinence syndrome in newborns.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study examine:

- (1) the prevalence of neonatal abstinence syndrome in Montana;
- (2) whether certain areas of the state or certain populations experience a greater-than-average prevalence of neonatal abstinence syndrome;
- (3) the short-term and long-term effects that prenatal exposure to opioids and other drugs has on children and on a family's need for both health care and social services;
- (4) efforts being undertaken in Montana communities and in other states to decrease opioid use by pregnant women and to mitigate the effects of opioid withdrawal in infants; and
- (5) best practices for approaching the health problems caused by the use of opioids or illicit drugs during pregnancy and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study determine whether practices in use in Montana communities or in other states could be effectively replicated to reduce the prevalence and effects of the use of opioids or illicit drugs by pregnant women throughout Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include representatives of the department of public health and human services, local county health departments, hospitals, health care providers, substance use disorder treatment providers, and other parties interested in preventing prenatal drug use and in mitigating the effects of neonatal abstinence syndrome.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 67th Legislature.

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