



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

Aug. 21, 2019

Local health care professionals recommend no cannabis use for pregnant and breastfeeding moms

Research shows that cannabis use during pregnancy can increase the risk of low birth weight and affect a baby's brain development officials from a workgroup of the local Perinatal Substance Use Disorder Project told the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors during a presentation Tuesday.

The group, made up of staff from First 5 Humboldt, North Coast Health Improvement and Information Network, St. Joseph Hospital, Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Humboldt State University and the California Center for Rural Policy, started meeting in 2016 to discuss the high rates of perinatal substance use in the county.

DHHS Public Health Director Michele Stephens said the topic of cannabis is not new. "With the legalization of cannabis for adult use, the conversation about recommendations for the use of cannabis while pregnant or breastfeeding has been emphasized statewide. Without research-based messaging, women are relying on their peers and CBD or cannabis businesses for information."

Laura Mojica, a nurse and lactation consultant at St. Joseph Hospital and member of the workgroup, said, "Parents deserve to receive current data about the risks of using cannabis while breastfeeding," acknowledging the often mixed messages around cannabis use during pregnancy.

During the Board's meeting, the group presented its findings as well as a resolution stressing the importance of women who are pregnant, contemplating pregnancy or breastfeeding to avoid using cannabis.

"Educating our local health care providers to ensure that they have up-to-date information about these risks is an essential piece to answering the questions parents may have about cannabis use while pregnant or breastfeeding," Mojica said.

Stephens said there is no research that shows what amount is safe, adding that until more information available, it is important to avoid it in any form.

For more information, call the Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Division at 707-441-5573.

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Perinatal Substance Use Disorder Project workgroup participants from left: Patty Torres, Jessica Osborne-Stafsnes, Michele Stephens, Mary Ann Hansen, Laura Mojica and Emily Adams.