



CWTP | Substance Abuse Training Partnership



TOPIC

Lunchtime
LIVE

LEARNING INTERACTIONS
with VALUED EXPERTS

CARA: Cross-System Opportunities to Protect Ohio Children

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 is the first major federal addiction legislation in 40 years, and the most comprehensive effort undertaken to address the opioid epidemic. This webinar views CARA from a child welfare and community partner perspective; explores cross-system collaboration opportunities opened by CARA; and identifies strategies for improving outcomes with infants and families impacted by substance abuse.



KEY POINTS

1. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 2003 required states to address the needs of infants affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms from prenatal exposure. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder was added in the Act's reauthorization in 2010.
2. CARA amended CAPTA to remove the term "Illegal" drugs as applied to substance abuse affecting infants and a requirement that plans of safe care apply to both infants and their families or caretakers.
3. CARA requires that all infants affected by or exposed prenatally to substances have a plan of safe care following their release from the care of health care providers.
4. A plan of safe care describes the services and supports needed to address the safety needs of infants and their families, including health and substance use disorder treatment needs, developmental interventions for the baby, and services to support family stability.
5. CARA offers an opportunity for improved collaboration between public children service agencies (PCSA's) and their community partners, including: the medical community, substance use treatment, and developmental services.



CHILD WELFARE APPLICATION

CARA offers an opportunity for PCSA's to improve best practices for effective collaboration with community partners that address the safety needs of infants by **assuring** timely access to comprehensive medication assisted treatment, **preparing** mothers for safe births and Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement, **providing** consistent referral information, and **developing** processes that assure timely information sharing and monitoring across multiple systems for family stability and well-being.

- CARA includes both legal and illegal substance abuse; meaning if an infant is exposed and/or affected by a substance which is legal (alcohol, prescribed medications, etc.) these infants are at risk just as an infant who is impacted by illegal substances. PCSA staff need to be well-trained on the effects of substance exposed infants with an emphasis on alcohol, still the primary cause of developmental disorders.
- PCSAs decide to open an investigation based on information provided by the referral source. PCSAs are encouraged to share standard guidelines and specific questions with mandated reporters that will help CPS screeners determine if a case should be opened to assess the risk and safety concerns for the infant, mother and any affected family member.
- Referral sources need reporting processes that support information sharing with PCSA's at the time a referral is made to ensure a plan of safe care is in place and adequate to ensure the safety of the child and stabilization of the family.
- PCSA's can initiate agreements with local hospitals that identify the information needed for initial referrals and what information is included when completing a multi-disciplinary plan of safe care at the time of discharge.



LEARN MORE

Webinar Learning Tools

1. [Learning Assessment](#) – Assess your learning and identify areas for improvement. This tool can be used individually or as a team activity.
2. [Individual Learning Guide](#) – Spend some time on self-reflection and application of webinar content.
3. [Team Discussion Guide](#) – Use this guide for conversation with your team applying webinar content to collaborative practice.

Handouts

- [CARA Legislative Description](#)
- [Ohio Collaboration Guide](#)
- [Ohio Community Plan of Safe Care Brochure](#)
- [Ohio Mandated Reporter Guidelines](#)
- [Ohio Medical Community Guide](#)
- [SACWIS Updates Summary](#)

Resources

National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW):

[\(2017\) Improving Outcomes for Pregnant Women and Postpartum Women with Opioid Use Disorders and Their Infants, Families and Caregivers](#)

[\(2016\) A Collaborative Approach to the Treatment of Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorders](#)

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS):

[SACWIS Functionality – CARA](#) and [CARA Community Kit](#)

Training

NCSACW (2018). [Planning for Safe Care: What your Family Drug Court Needs to Know about Serving Children and Families with Opioid Use Disorders.](#)

NCSACW (2017). [Supporting Families in Child Welfare Affected by Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders](#)

NCSACW (2016). [Online Tutorials for Child Welfare, Treatment and Legal Professionals: Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Treatment, and Family Recovery](#)



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