

# Supporting Iowans with Lived Experience of Methamphetamine Use During Pregnancy

Understanding the challenges and barriers faced by Iowans using methamphetamine during pregnancy and the healthcare system's role.

## Key Issues Identified from Interviews

### Screening & Testing Concerns

- "Fear of losing custody prevents disclosure of substance use"
- "Informed consent for screening is not clear"

### Clear Communication

- "Patients need clear communication on testing, what happens with results, and what support is available"
- "Fear of child protective services leads to nondisclosure"

### Supportive Measures During Pregnancy

- "Need for a support system to manage recovery, housing, and safety"
- "Respect for patient autonomy is critical"

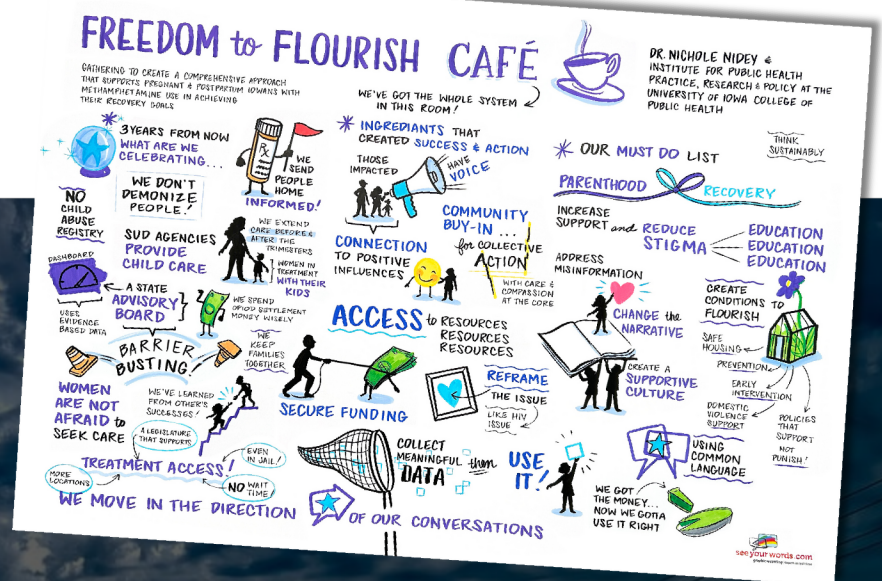
### Access to Care/Treatment

- "Lack of treatment centers that accept pregnant women with children"
- "Confusion and stigma around treatment availability and access"

## Healthcare Provider Perspective

"Barriers to care include stigma, lack of training, and concerns about mandated reporting"

"Stigma and legal fears prevent effective care"



# Collaborative Insights and Policy Gaps

## Federal Policy (CAPTA)

- "Need revisions to make these policies supportive, not punitive"
- "Current child abuse reporting laws unintentionally harm families"

Lack of Patient-Centered Screening and Testing Processes

Barriers to Treatment Access

Fear of Child Removal and Employment Consequences

Need for Transparent and Supportive Policies

## Recommendations for Improvement

### Enhance Support for Patients

- "Provide clear communication about the process and support options for pregnant individuals with substance use"
- "Initiate plans of safe care before delivery"

### Policy & Legal Reforms

- "Extend the 90-day appeal period for child abuse registry placement"
- "Advocate for more access to treatment programs, including medication-assisted treatment"

### Training & Stigma Reduction

- "Provide ongoing training for healthcare providers in trauma-informed care and harm reduction"
- "Address stigma in substance use treatment programs and improve patient-provider trust"

### Data & Accountability

- "Conduct studies on the impact of the child abuse registry on employment and family outcomes"
- "Increase transparency in the child custody and child protective services processes"

"Creating a system that universally supports, not punishes, individuals with substance use challenges can lead to better outcomes for families and communities."

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Dr. Nidey conducted interviews with Iowans with lived expertise of methamphetamine use during pregnancy and healthcare professionals who care for them in 2024. Additionally, she convened subject matter experts to discuss and identify barriers and solutions to supporting pregnant and postpartum Iowans with methamphetamine use. To learn more, visit Dr. Nidey's [webpage](#). This project was supported by the [Institute for Public Health Practice, Research and Policy at the University of Iowa College of Public Health](#).