Mental Health Clinician Shortage, Long-Term Unemployment associated with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

*Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is a withdrawal syndrome experienced by some opioid-exposed infants after birth.

Based on county-level data from 8 states, rates of NAS increased from 3.2 to 14.5 per 1000 hospital births from 2009-2015.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

- **78%** of metropolitan counties had a shortage of mental health providers
- **86%** of metropolitan or rural counties had a shortage of mental health providers
- **91%** of rural remote counties had a shortage of mental health providers

**ECONOMIC FACTORS**

From 2009-2015, the 10-year unemployment rate increased from 6.5% to 8.2%. This was associated with higher rates of NAS in rural remote counties. County macroeconomic conditions affect rates of NAS, especially in rural counties.

**POLICYMAKERS** should recognize a healthy economy can contribute to a healthy population.

Counts with a shortage of mental health providers were associated with higher rates of NAS. Adjusted IRR, 1.17

Adjusted IRR, 1.34

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For more opioid policy research, visit: www.rand.org/health-care/centers/optic.html

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