

# Perinatal Substance Use: Transforming Care in Alberta

July 21, 2026

10:00am-12:00pm MT

This session provides an overview of perinatal substance use, neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), and current best practices for supporting families during the perinatal period. Participants will gain knowledge about enhanced rooming-in programs in Alberta, Opioid Agonist Treatment, non-pharmacologic interventions for NAS management, and collaborative care strategies that recognize mom is medicine. The session will also include a patient partner with lived experience, who will share their story and offer valuable insights.



## Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the current Alberta landscape of perinatal substance use and neonatal abstinence syndrome, including the importance of reducing stigma and improving access to compassionate care
- Explain the key ingredients of enhanced rooming-in including maternal stabilization
- Identify essential ingredients in Alberta's "recipe" transforming perinatal substance use care, including interdisciplinary collaboration, trauma informed care, opioid agonist treatment, non pharmacological interventions and the principle that mom is medicine
- Reflect on the perspective of a patient partner with lived experience to better understand the impact of compassionate, relationship-based care on families and communities

## Speakers:

Ivy Parsons, Clinical Addiction Practice Lead, Recovery Alberta, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Mother Baby Care Improvement Program. Ivy Currently provides counselling and therapeutic support to pregnant and postpartum individuals in Maswkwacis who are experiencing substance use and/ or mental health concerns. Over the past two years, she has worked in partnership with Maskwacis community to support the co-creation of culturally informed perinatal journey map designed to strengthen care pathways, improve continuity of support and help bridge individuals to services.

Jenna Pasquayak, Nova Star Nascent patient partner

Lauralee VanDerkaa, Grande Prairie Regional Hospital Enhanced Rooming-in site lead

Kelsey Craner, Provincial Virtual Opioid Dependency Program Perinatal Social Worker

Alexandra Cole, Provincial Virtual Opioid Dependency Program Perinatal Nurse



**Target Audience:** The session is intended for healthcare providers, public health professionals, community support workers, and anyone who works with or supports pregnant and parenting individuals affected by substance use

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