

## **Provider Forum on Improving NH Systems of Care for Pregnant and Newly Parenting Women Receiving Methadone Therapy**

The Governor's Commission Perinatal Substance Exposure Task Force held a forum in January 2015 due to the opioid epidemic in NH and the devastating affects it has had on our individuals, families and communities. The focus of this provider forum was to strengthen the capacity of providers to protect unborn and newborn children and their mothers from the harm associated with opiate abuse within the context of expanded knowledge, improved communications, and improved treatment and care protocols.

Over 127 professionals from the field participated including the medical director of each of the eight Methadone clinics in NH along with at least one other member of their treatment staff, obstetrical and pediatric providers, representatives from the Attorney General's office, NH Medicaid, the NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services, the Governor's Commission Treatment Task Force, and other clinical staff.

The full-day event consisted of didactic sessions on methadone treatment and a discussion of the legal obstacles faced when providers try to communicate with each other relative to specific patients while remaining compliant with the federal confidentiality requirements. The day also included open discussion about areas of concern participants had about the care these patients are currently receiving. Additionally, small groups were formed to prioritize these concerns and determine possible workgroups.

This forum helped bring all caregivers, each playing different roles, into one room to discuss challenges and how to improve the quality of care these women, babies and families receive.

As a result of the forum, two workgroups were formed including the Methadone Dosing Workgroup and the Patient Support Workgroup.