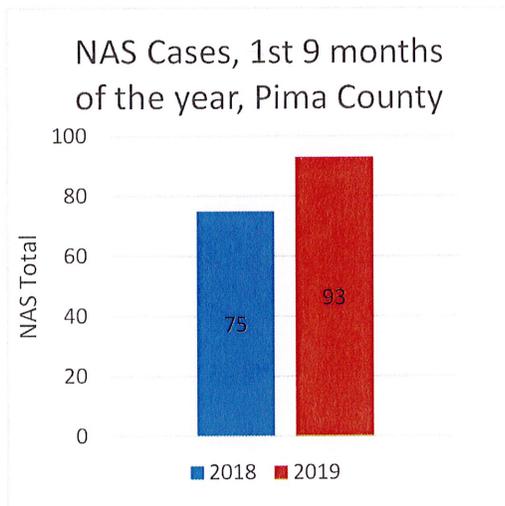


November 4, 2019

RE: Increase in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) cases diagnosed in Pima County

Dear Community Providers,

In recent months, there has been a significant increase in the number of NAS cases being diagnosed in Pima County. There have been 93 total NAS cases diagnosed for the first 9 calendar months of 2019, compared to 75 cases for the same time period of 2018, a 24% increase.



The Pima County Health Department is alerting all local specialty providers who work directly with pregnant and parenting women who are being treated for opioid use or other forms of chronic substance use disease.

- The rise in NAS in Pima County is closely related to the ongoing substance use epidemic, which has created a surge in drug overdoses and increased the number of people struggling with substance use disorders.
- Highly addictive substances such as fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine are more abundant and cheaper to buy than in recent years, helping to fuel widespread use.

In the presence of substance use, we know that it is critical to maintain the bond between mom and baby for long-term recovery and success as a family. Providers who deliver critical services to this population should be aware of the trends that may be influencing the increase in NAS.

The Health Department will continue to conduct surveillance of these trends and will produce public facing reports. We hope this information will support your treatment strategy and ability to plan for how to best care for these families. If you have questions, please contact our Community Mental Health and Addiction team at CMHA@Pima.Gov or call (520) 724-7797. Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,



Bob England, MD, MPH
Interim Director
Pima County Health Department



Mark Person, MSP
Program Manager
Community Mental Health and Addiction