

Coordinating Care and Support for Families Affected by Prenatal Substance Use

Developing a Data-Informed Strategic Framework for Plans of Safe Care in Colorado



Prenatal substance use is a growing issue in Colorado.

- There was a 98% increase in newborns exposed to opioids prenatally between 2012 to 2018.
- Unintentional drug overdose was the second leading cause of maternal death (2020).
- Substance use contributed to nearly one-third of pregnancy-associated/related deaths (2020).

Of the 1,578 newborns reported for substance exposure in 2022, only 39% had a Plan of Safe Care.

Leveraging Plans of Safe Care to Advanced Cross-System Care Coordination

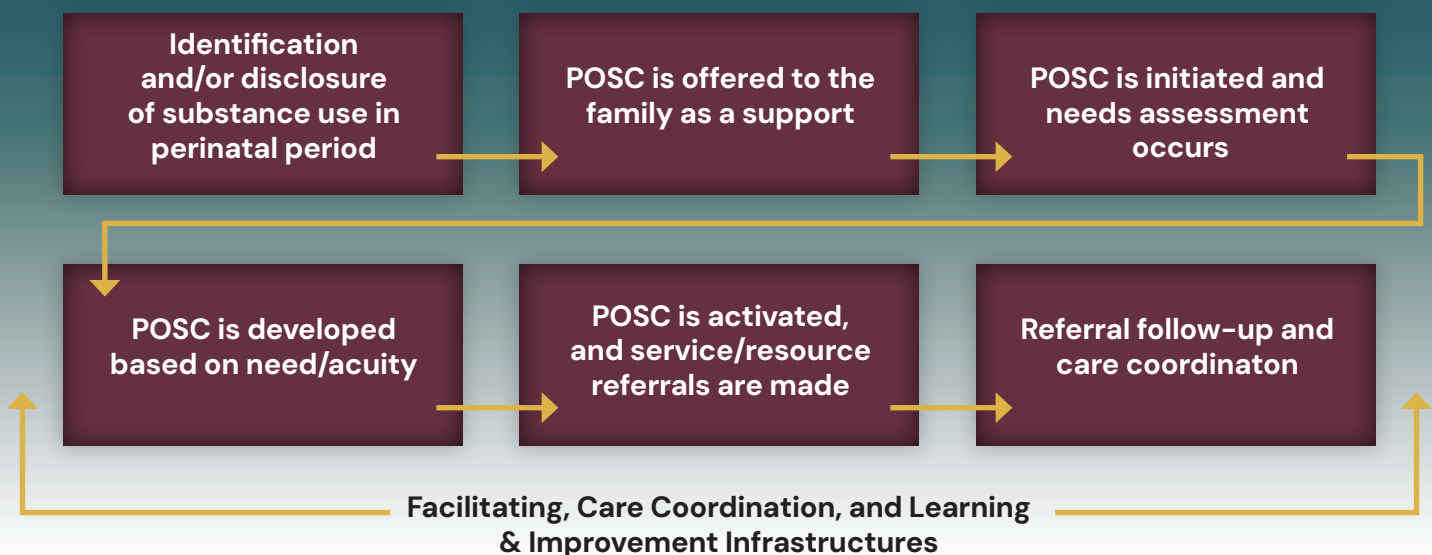
Plans of Safe Care (POSC) are recognized by policy leaders, health care providers, community members, and families as an important means to coordinate care across systems and improve health for families affected by prenatal substance use.

Societal stigma about addiction and fears about child welfare involvement mean many pregnant individuals are reluctant to seek treatment and support. Engaging trusted organizations and providers to initiate a POSC can help ensure families receive the support they need and deserve. Initial points of entry vary from community to community and may include health care providers, community-based organizations, human service systems, and more. After a POSC is initiated, specialized providers can complete the POSC and structures put in place to ensure ongoing care coordination throughout the pregnancy, birth, and first year postpartum.

Plan of Safe Care

A process intended to ensure the safety and well-being of an infant and caregiver affected by prenatal substance use, including connection to needed resources to stabilize the dyad together when possible.

Initiating and Activating a POSC





Helping Families Thrive, Together

Plans of Safe Care meet families where they are with coordinated services and supports

Guiding Features

1

Initiate POSC prenatally or as soon as prenatal substance use is recognized

2

Voluntary engagement by families when opportunity allows

3

Comprehensive service delivery and tracking

4

Cross-system and collaborative POSC infrastructure

Piloting a Data-Informed POSC Framework for Colorado

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare, is resourcing a pilot to align and accelerate POSC progress. The San Luis Valley is the identified catchment area for the pilot.

Goal

Develop a data-informed strategic framework for coordinated POSC in the catchment area with replicability across Colorado.

Focus

Define a process for proactive, voluntary initiation of POSC in community-based spaces while also strengthening the role of health and human service providers. Identify opportunities to increase POSC initiation in the prenatal period.

Pilot Launch and Learning

The POSC Pilot Team used a data-informed approach to select the San Luis Valley as the catchment area for the pilot. The aim is to partner with area stakeholders to co-design and implement the POSC Framework. Implementation will build on existing efforts in the region, capitalize on investments, address gaps, and innovate to meet the unique needs of differing communities.

Addressing the many needs of children and families affected by perinatal substance use requires a data-informed, family-centered approach across multiple systems. The pilot offers an important opportunity to create a shared understanding of how best to provide Plans of Safe Care while ensuring communities can meet their unique needs. Together we can cultivate a culture of collaborative responsibility for ensuring Colorado families have every opportunity to thrive.



Colorado Plans of Safe Care Collaborative Team

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