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**PREVENTING FASD: MCHP FINDS INSIGHT MENTORING
PROGRAM SUPPORTS WOMEN WHO USE ALCOHOL DURING
PREGNANCY**

A new report by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy at the University of Manitoba finds the InSight Mentoring Program is helping women with alcohol addictions make healthier choices while pregnant and once they've given birth.

The study: *Long-Term Outcomes of Manitoba's InSight Mentoring Program: A Comparative Analysis*, examines women participating in the program and others who did not. InSight, a provincially-run mentoring program provided by Healthy Child Manitoba, is offered to pregnant women and new mothers who have used alcohol or drugs during pregnancy. The program helps women set their own goals and access the health and social support services they need to improve their family's health and well-being.

"The good news is that InSight reached women who were clearly in need of social support and could be helped by this kind of service. It increased healthy behaviours and in many cases helped connect women and their families to the social services they needed," says lead author Dr. Chelsea Ruth, neonatologist at the Children's Hospital, assistant professor in the dept. of paediatrics and child health, University of Manitoba and research scientist at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy.

MCHP analyzed data on 226 women who were in the program. These data were then linked with the data on health and social services housed at MCHP. All identifying information was either removed or scrambled to protect the participants' privacy.

The study showed that before enrollment in InSight, 81% of the women reported alcohol use during pregnancy and 59% of the women began using alcohol at a very early age (13 or younger). Many of these women also struggled with mental health issues. A high proportion also reported unmet needs for social housing or other social services.

During the InSight program, the women drank less alcohol both overall and during pregnancy, used more reliable forms of contraception to prevent

unwanted pregnancy and became better connected with the social supports they needed. While the study found an increase in the number of newborns taken into care, the women were better supported and the overall number of children apprehended declined.

The study also compared these women to a matched group not enrolled in the program and found InSight increased prenatal care: the women in the program visited their doctors earlier and more often than those in the comparison group. The women were also more connected to community support groups that are part of the Healthy Baby Program. However, these improvements were not sustained after they exited the program.

“The Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet is committed to evaluating and sharing the results of key investments in priority areas, such as FASD prevention,” says Melanie Wight, Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities, and Chair of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. “We appreciate the thorough review undertaken by MCHP. As the InSight program is a critical component of the Provincial FASD Strategy, I am pleased that the report demonstrates it is reaching women and families most in need of support and is successfully enabling participants to have healthier pregnancies and improved family well-being.”

The study is an early look at the effects of InSight. Further studies would benefit from more complete data collection and a larger number of participants.

The full report can be downloaded from the MCHP website at:

umanitoba.ca/medicine/units/mchp

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Founded in 1883 as Western Canada’s first medical school, the University of Manitoba College of Medicine has graduated more than 7,000 physicians who have become influential medical leaders, world renowned health researchers and dedicated doctors. As Manitoba’s only medical school, the U of M College of Medicine has educated and trained the majority of our province’s physicians.