

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA**

RESOLUTION 2024 –

WHEREAS, NATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION WEEK, May 12-18, 2024, is a public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations across the country that are preventing substance use and misuse and promoting positive mental health to all members of the community. It is an annual observance in the United States dedicated to highlighting the vital role of substance abuse prevention in both individual and community health. This observance is supported by SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration proclaiming all Americans to engage in appropriate programs and activities that promote comprehensive substance abuse prevention efforts within their communities; and

WHEREAS, babies being born Substance Exposed Newborns (“SEN”) and babies in Hernando County are suffering from Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (“NAS”) and have many health challenges and suffer from ongoing conditions including premature birth, low birth weight and other NAS symptoms; and

WHEREAS, every 25 minutes a baby is born in this county addicted to illegal or prescription drugs which is equivalent to more than 20,000 babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) each year averaging approximately 6.8 infants out of every 1,000 births. (Nichq.org); and

WHEREAS, there are a more than 88 babies born each year in Hernando County that are treated for NAS based off 3-year averages, of which 3 per year are babies born to teen mothers; and

WHEREAS, the opioid addiction epidemic, coupled with the increase in fentanyl supply and distribution has led to an increase in substance abusing parents has resulted in a significant increase in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), premature birth, and drug withdrawal in developing babies; and

WHEREAS, in NAS babies, symptoms immediately following the birth of SEN babies include constantly crying, tremors, irritability, sleep problems, hyperactive reflexes, seizures, poor feeding and sucking, vomiting, loose stools/dehydration, and sweating which may increase parental stress and decrease tolerance resulting in an increased risk of child abuse; and

WHEREAS, longer-term outcomes of children exposed to substances prenatally have found most SEN babies suffer from developmental delays and speech/language impairments which leads to difficulties in learning which can cause parental stress, difficulty coping, and difficulty maintaining sobriety which causes an increased risk of child abuse; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of May 12-18, 2024, as **NATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION WEEK**, the Hernando County Substance Exposed Newborn Task Force (SEN) mission is:

- Increase awareness to Hernando County residents about SEN & NAS to pregnant women and the correlation between substance abuse and increased risk of child abuse.
- Increase education and reduce stigma in seeking help for pregnant women using substances that poses an increased risk to their children for child abuse and neglect.
- Provide community resources and education to Hernando County residents about the programs and resources available to assist in reducing the number of pregnant women who use opioids and are at risk of fentanyl exposure.
- Take steps to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect as a result of SEN or NAS by ceasing the use of alcohol or drugs during pregnancy; and
- Assist mothers involved in the child welfare system gain priority access to substance abuse treatment slots and develop cross-system partnerships to ensure coordinated service linkage between child welfare and other community agencies to address each family's needs.

WHEREAS, steps can be taken to reduce the chance that a child will be born with a complication as a result of SEN or NAS by stopping the use of alcohol or drugs during pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, early identification of a child born with NAS symptoms coupled with early intervention services typically improves the child's quality of life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HERNANDO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Board of County Commissioners hereby proclaim May 12-18, 2024 as **NATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION WEEK** in Hernando County.

SECTION 2. The Board of County Commissioners will continue to educate the community on prevention by raising public awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health.

ADOPTED in Regular Session this 23th day of April 2024, A.D.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Attest:

Douglas A. Chorvat, Jr.
Clerk of Circuit Court & Comptroller

Elizabeth Narverud
Chairperson

John Allocco
Commissioner

Brian Hawkins
Vice Chairman

Steve Champion
Commissioner

Jerry Campbell
Second Vice Chairman