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Leading Experts in High-Risk Pregnancy Issue a ‘Call to Action’ for Law Makers and Clinicians
Pregnant Women Must be Considered in Ongoing Efforts to Combat the Opioid Epidemic

Washington DC, February 14, 2018 – Substance use during pregnancy, particularly the misuse of opioids, has increased in parallel with the national rate of opioid misuse. While much attention has been focused on the negative impacts of opioid use on the fetus and newborn, less attention has been given to the pregnant woman. To address this gap, leaders in obstetric care, addiction medicine, mental health and pediatrics gathered last month for a two-day workshop entitled, “Substance Use Disorders in Pregnancy.” The workshop was held in conjunction with the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine’s 38th Annual Pregnancy Meeting™.

Expert participants in the workshop agreed to the following next steps:

- Issuing a “call to action” that highlights the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum women with opioid use disorder (OUD).
- The development of an executive summary of the workshop to be published in a future issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (AJOG).
- The creation of a new SMFM [position statement](#) with specific policy recommendations related to OUD, including the promotion of policy and infrastructure changes that destigmatize OUD among women of childbearing age.
- The development of new clinical documents with specific recommendations on screening and treating pregnant women for OUD, as well as pain management during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

“Pregnant women have largely been left out of the national conversation related to the opioid epidemic,” said Alfred Abuhamad, MD, SMFM’s immediate past-president and originator of the workshop. “As obstetric care providers, we have an important role to play in appropriately prescribing opioids, as well as acting as advocates for our patients that come into pregnancy using prescription or illicit opioids. SMFM stands ready to work with policy makers, obstetric care providers, pediatricians, community organizations, and government partners to prepare for, recognize, and respond to opioid misuse during pregnancy.”

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About SMFM

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (est. 1977) is a non-profit membership organization representing the interests of obstetricians/gynecologists who have additional formal education in maternal-fetal medicine. The Society is devoted to reducing high-risk pregnancy complications by providing continuing education to its more than 2,000 members on the latest pregnancy assessment and

treatment methods. It also serves as an advocate for improving public policy and expanding research funding and opportunities for maternal-fetal medicine. SMFM hosts an annual scientific meeting in which new ideas and research in the area of maternal-fetal medicine are unveiled and discussed. For more information, visit www.smfm.org.