The Youngest Victims of the Opioid Crisis: Child Welfare & Opioid Prescription Rates in Michigan

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Connecting Two Crises
- 1/3 of counties had more opioid prescriptions than people
- Ranked 10th in the nation for opioid prescriptions

Rates of Abuse and Neglect per 1,000 Children Are on the Rise

From 2011 – 2016:
- 26% Rise in Michigan child abuse & neglect rates
- 9% Rise in children in foster care
- 15% Decline in Michigan children in foster care

Measuring the Link
- OLS regression analysis on panel data
- County level opioid prescription rates (CDC)
- County level out-of-home placements due to abuse and/or neglect
- Controls for poverty, population, and race (Kids Count Data Center)

Empirical Results: A Lasting Effect
For every 10 additional opioid prescriptions per 100 people per county, there is a predicted 6% rise in children in out-of-home placements due to abuse & neglect 3 years later

Why It’s Probably Even Worse
- Methods do not capture illicit opiate use, including heroin and fentanyl
- Child out-of-home placements only represent abuse and neglect severe enough to warrant removal
- Michigan does not have information on the number of children removed due to substance abuse

Moving Forward
- Track it! Legislature mandates reporting on child removals due to drug activity, but the state reporting system (MiSACWIS) does not have the capability
- Treat the parents, help the kids. Apply quick, comprehensive treatment. Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) utilizes medications and behavioral counseling for effective outcomes
- Learn from other states. Ohio expanded family drug courts, Kentucky’s evidence-based START program, Connecticut’s 2 generational pay-for-success Family Based Recovery program