

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contact: Jennifer Cooper**

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DIGNITY HEALTH-ST. ROSE DOMINICAN HOSPITALS ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAM TO HELP EXPECTANT MOTHERS BATTLING ADDICTION

HENDERSON, NV (June 18, 2018) – Today, Dignity Health-St. Rose Dominican Hospitals announced the launch of a new program developed to help pregnant mothers who are battling addiction. EMPOWERED (Empowering Mothers for Positive Outcomes With Education, Recovery, and Early Development) is designed to help those mothers whose children may suffer from Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome as a result of medicine, drugs, nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and other substances used during pregnancy.

EMPOWERED will create a continuum of care for both mother and baby, with support and resources available during prenatal, postpartum, and early childhood development.

“Opioid addiction, and substance abuse in general, is a real battle that many struggle to overcome, including pregnant mothers,” said **Dr. Deepa Nagar, MEDNAX-affiliated neonatologist with Dignity Health-St. Rose Dominican’s Siena Campus**. “Without proper intervention, many of these babies are born with significant addictions themselves and the withdrawal from these drugs is a very serious challenge. Through EMPOWERED, we are working to remove the stigma of mental health issues and drug addiction for pregnant mothers. With EMPOWERED, we are hoping to not only change the life of the baby, but also its mother by providing the right kind of medical intervention and support to help ensure a healthy life – free from addiction.”

“Opioid abuse and misuse can affect all of us, even unborn babies at no fault of their own,” added **Attorney General Adam Laxalt**. “As a state, it is important to work collaboratively in order to combat opioid addiction and promote education and awareness. This is a critical issue facing our state and nation, and I’m hopeful that our collective efforts can make a much-needed difference in our communities.”

Once screened by an OB/GYN, a mother patient who tests positive for opioid or substance usage will be referred to a substance abuse coordinator. Should that patient be willing to accept help, they will be screened for mental health issues and will receive a referral for treatment, if necessary. This mother will also be supported throughout her pregnancy in a number of ways through St. Rose’s Outreach Centers: group peer support, WIC, lactation support, parenting classes, and education on Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. Because the mother is part of EMPOWERED, her physicians will be ready for the delivery of her child and any medical issues the baby may face upon delivery. The baby will be monitored after birth in the NICUs at Siena and San Martin Hospitals as well as upon discharge by pediatricians at Dignity Health Medical Group.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) refers to the symptoms that babies may have when withdrawing from contact with opiates, stimulants, sedatives, alcohol and some antidepressants. Even if an opioid is used as prescribed by a doctor, it may cause an unborn baby to suffer from NAS. Heroin, morphine, codeine, oxycodone, OxyContin or

Percocet, hydrocodone (Vicodin), meperidine, and fentanyl (Demerol) are just some of the drugs that may cause NAS.

EMPOWERED was made possible through grant funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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About Dignity Health-St. Rose Dominican

As the community's only not-for-profit, faith-based health system, Dignity Health-St. Rose Dominican has been guided by the vision and core values of the Adrian Dominican Sisters for 70 years. As the Henderson and Las Vegas communities grow, the St. Rose Dominican health system and its nearly 4,000 employees will continue the Sisters' mission of serving people in need. St. Rose Dominican is a member of the 22-state Dignity Health network of nearly 9,000 physicians, 62,000 employees, and 400 care centers, including hospitals, urgent and occupational care, imaging centers, home health and primary care clinics. For more information, visit our website at www.strosehospitals.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or our [Blog](#).