



It's Time to End Test and Report Practices

Hospitals and medical care providers across the United States test pregnant and birthing people and newborns for drugs then report results to the family regulation system (also known as child protection system). It's a harmful practice that hurts Black, Indigenous, and Latine families the most.

Keep reading to learn why this matters for reproductive health, rights and justice and what we want to do about it.

DRUG TEST RESULTS

For each question, first decide which answer is best.
The answer document the row of ovals numbered the same as the question.
The oval in that row lettered the same as your answer.
Mark the oval completely.
Marks heavy and black.

Test and Report

What's Happening

Hospitals and medical care providers test pregnant and birthing people and newborns for drugs, usually without even asking them. Then they report positive results to the family regulation system.

Who's Affected

Medical care providers test Black, Indigenous, and Latine patients more often, and report them to the family regulation system more often, even though drug use is similar across all people.

The Consequences

Families face stressful investigations by the family regulation system and may even be separated right after birth. This is violence!

This practice began during the "war on drugs" in the 1980s. It wasn't based on medical evidence and still harms families today.

Drug Testing Rarely Helps, Often Harms



Not Needed Medically

Most pregnant and birthing people and newborns don't need drug testing to get good healthcare, including those exposed to substances. Open, caring talks between patients and providers they trust work better.



Often Wrong

The drug tests used often show false results. These tests can't tell the difference between prescribed medicines, over-the-counter drugs, and illegal substances. Yet healthcare providers use them all the time!



A Drug Test Is Not A Parenting Test

A positive drug test tells nothing about how well someone can parent, how much they care for their child, or how deeply they love their family.

Test and Report Is Racist

1.5x

Higher Rate of Drug Testing

Black pregnant people are at least 1.5x more likely to be drug tested

4-10x

Higher Reporting Rate

Black newborns are reported to family regulation systems 4-10 times more often than white newborns

0%

Difference in Use Rates

Research shows equivalent substance use rates across racial demographics

This is racism in healthcare and the racism gets even worse in the family regulation system.



The Devastating Impact on Families

Hospital Holds

Parents can't take their babies home after a positive test

Family Separation

Babies and parents are kept apart during critical bonding time—this is way worse for babies than substance exposure!

Lasting Harm

More risk of post partum depression and maternal mortality

This separation goes against what's best for babies exposed to substances, which is skin-to-skin contact and time with parents.



Breaking Trust with Healthcare

Avoiding Healthcare During Pregnancy

When pregnant people fear being watched and losing their children, they often skip important healthcare before and after birth.

Taking Away Choices

Testing without permission treats pregnant people like they are dangers to their babies, when in fact they are the best thing for their babies. And it takes away their right to make choices about their bodies.

Breaking Trust with Doctors

When hospitals become places that report on patients, the trust needed for good healthcare falls apart.

Leading medical organizations are against drug testing without permission and punishing people for substance use during pregnancy.

Physicians for Reproductive Health Supports

1 Asking permission before drug testing

Healthcare providers must get oral and written consent before drug testing pregnant and birthing people or their newborns.

2 Ending medically unnecessary drug testing

It's time to end the vast majority of drug testing.

3 Ending reporting positive results to the family regulation system

Healthcare providers sending families into systems of surveillance and separation goes against the core of what we are supposed to do

Get in touch with us at Isangoi@prh.org to help us fight test and report

Join the Maternal Health, Dignity and Consent Coalition in NY State,
<https://www.informedconsentny.com/> (you can join even if you're not in NY!)