

# Virginia's opioid epidemic requires two-generation response

Community solutions should prioritize services for families

## COMMUNITIES ACROSS VIRGINIA ARE EXPERIENCING AN INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE EXPOSED INFANTS

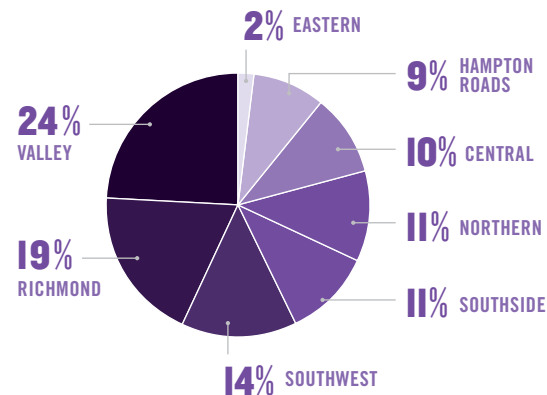
FROM FISCAL YEAR 2015 TO 2016, VIRGINIA EXPERIENCED A

**21%** INCREASE

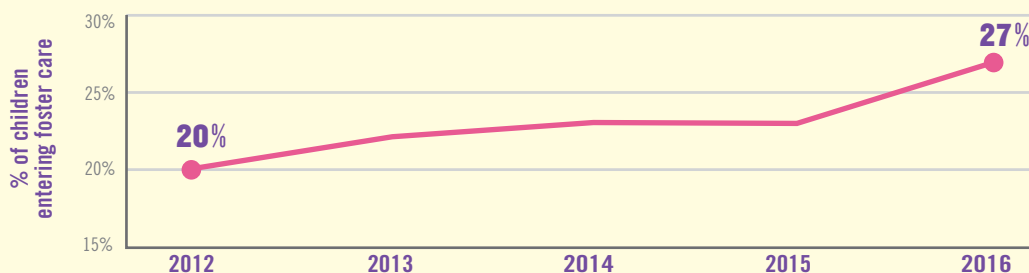
in the number of substance exposed infants reported to the local departments of social services

THAT'S  
**1,334**

reports of substance exposed infants in FY 2016



Substance abuse disrupts families: over the last 5 years, more children have entered foster care due to parental substance abuse



## COMMUNITIES ARE STEPPING UP TO ADDRESS THE INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE EXPOSED INFANTS, BUT THERE IS MORE WORK TO DO

Home visiting models provide parents with a mentor or coach to help parents connect to the path to recovery and to connect children to appropriate health and developmental services.

Early Impact Virginia estimates that current home visiting programs

CAN REACH LESS THAN

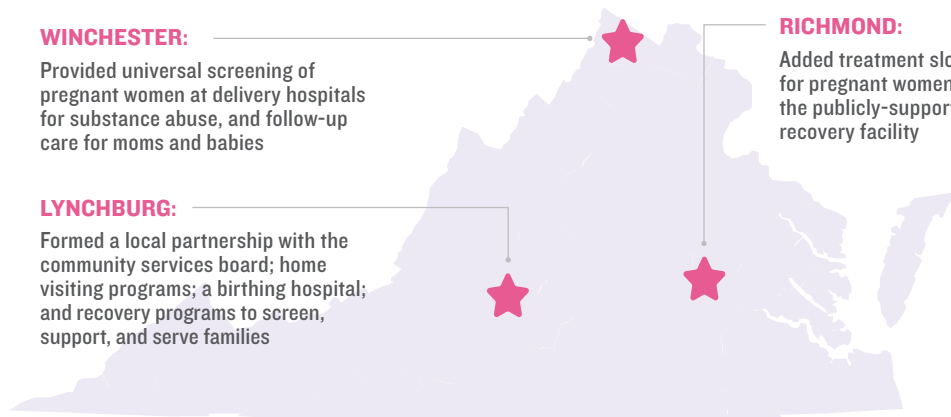
**10%** OF AT-RISK FAMILIES WHO COULD BENEFIT

### Collaborative partnerships in some communities include:

**WINCHESTER:** Provided universal screening of pregnant women at delivery hospitals for substance abuse, and follow-up care for moms and babies

**LYNCHBURG:** Formed a local partnership with the community services board; home visiting programs; a birthing hospital; and recovery programs to screen, support, and serve families

**RICHMOND:** Added treatment slots for pregnant women in the publicly-supported recovery facility



\* All sources available at [vakids.org/elections](http://vakids.org/elections)



## Questions for Candidates

#VAVotes4Kids

- 1 Substance abuse is not new; we know that generations of families have dealt with this issue. **What do you think is different about the opioid epidemic that Virginia is currently facing, and how would you respond to it if elected?**
- 2 Virginia has recently expanded Medicaid benefits to treat substance use disorders through the Addiction and Recovery Treatment Services (ARTS). **What do you find valuable about these efforts? Is there anything you would change or improve?**
- 3 It has been frequently reported that the opioid epidemic is a crisis in rural parts of the state, but there are increases in overdoses in urban and suburban areas, as well. **What are the roles you see for localities, regions, and the state in addressing this epidemic?**
- 4 Substance abuse by parents affects both the parents and their children. Brain research shows that positive attachment between a parent and child in the first few years of life is critical to the child's healthy brain development. Substance abuse can significantly impact those early bonds between parents and children. **If elected, what policy solutions would you promote to address the needs of the whole family?**
- 5 Public safety and the courts are involved in monitoring illegal substance abuse. **How do you feel these intervention points are working? Are there other angles or strategies that should be considered?**
- 6 In the past year, 27% of children entered foster care due to parental substance abuse. The Virginia Department of Social Services has recently increased staff support to meet the increased need. **If elected, how would you handle the increase in families involved in foster care?**
- 7 A critical period to reach substance abusing women is during pregnancy. Virginia enrolls low-income pregnant women in public health insurance through Medicaid but maintains their insurance coverage only for 60 days after delivery. This short time period has been identified as barrier to ensuring that pregnant and postpartum women receive appropriate treatment services. **How would you address the substance abuse treatment needs of low-income women?**

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 807  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

804.649.0184  
info@vakids.org  
vakids.org

