

Knox County Commission



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Commissioner Amy Broyles will be attending the State of Women's Health Conference on Friday, April 24th, at the Crowne Plaza, 401 West Summit Hill Drive, in Knoxville. The yearly conference is sponsored by the Knox County Health Department, and this year's focus is on substance use and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

According to the Knox County Health Department, "in 2014, nearly 1,000 infants were born in Tennessee dependent on drugs, a condition known as neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). And, approximately 60 percent of these cases occurred in East Tennessee."

"This is an intensely complicated issue that will take many different approaches to address, including widespread community engagement," said KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. "Our hope is that attendees will leave with not only a better understanding of the condition and its broad impact on all income and education levels, but also new strategies for how we can work together to prevent it."

Twyla P. Wilson, LCSW, will be the keynote speaker at the Conference. Wilson has worked at the Duke University School of Medicine in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and specializes in treating individuals with mental health and addictive disorders. Wilson is also at the forefront of developing "gender-responsive, trauma-informed care."

According to the KCHD, "the conference will also include presentations from Dr. Martha Buchanan and Dr. Craig Towers, OB-GYN, University of Tennessee Medical Center; an interactive panel discussion; and input from state legislators."

"When I worked in social services, my focus was on teens with unintended pregnancies, many of whom also had a history of abuse and/or alcohol and drug addictions," remarked Commissioner Broyles. "It's distressing to see the number of babies born with NAS are rising. And now that the state has criminalized addiction in child-bearing women, the number of babies born without the benefit of pre-natal care, or who are born under unsafe conditions, will also rise. Not only is this ethically reprehensible, it is also a huge financial problem. It would be much wiser to invest our resources in prevention and expanded treatment options for these women."

The conference is free and open to the public. Registration is available at mybodymyfuture.com. Continuing education credits and continuing education contact hours are available for a \$10 fee. Event partners include the Metropolitan Drug Commission and East Tennessee Children's Hospital.

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