



## **Panel Hosts Hearing on Child Abuse/Neglect Tied to Substance Disorders on April 25 in Lansing**

*Michigan's Children, Children's Trust Fund Partner on Organizing First of Six Statewide Forums*

LANSING, MI --- [Michigan's Children](#) and the [Children's Trust Fund](#) of Michigan have teamed up to organize a series of public hearings before the state Citizens Review Panel on Prevention (CRPP) to generate better policies and responses to families suffering from substance disorders leading to the abuse and neglect of children.

The first of the public gatherings is Thursday, April 25, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capital Ave, Lansing. Five other meetings will take place across the state.

"We know that many families are investigated for child abuse or neglect due to the effects of substance misuse, resulting in a variety of interventions, including removing children and youth from their families," said Michele Corey, Michigan's Children Vice President for Programs. "We also know that early experiences of child abuse and neglect increases one's risk of developing a substance use disorder later in life."

The panel will focus on gathering different practices across the state as they relate to preventing child abuse and neglect tied to substance disorders. Besides looking at these regional differences, panelists will also identify service gaps in these regions. Themes identified in this hearing and others will lead to this year's CRPP's recommendations to the state Department of Health and Human Services and the Legislature, highlighting areas in need of support and policy development, including service gaps by region or specific population.

Citizen Review Panels such as the CRPP are federally required in each state to provide opportunities for experts, service providers, and citizens to share their personal and professional experiences that illuminate how states are succeeding or falling short in strengthening families to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect, and making sure that children, youth and families who have experienced maltreatment are provided opportunities to succeed, Corey added.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) estimates 8.7 million children have a parent who suffers from substance disorders, leading to higher foster care placements due to abuse and neglect, serious health problems for infants born into substance use, which left unaddressed could lead to concerns during childhood and adulthood, such as school failure, alcohol and drug use, obesity and heart disease, and even substance use in their own lives. Family recovery is difficult without supportive relationships, stability, and concrete resources for times of need – one stressful event can trigger a relapse for parents, destabilizing their family and exposing children to trauma. These factors, which have been proven to prevent cases of child abuse and neglect more broadly, work by shielding families from situations of extreme stress.

The hearing coincides with National Child Abuse Prevention month and in Michigan, **Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Day**. Preceding the hearing, a **rally on the steps of the Capitol will begin at 11 a.m.** followed by participants planting pinwheels in downtown Lansing to commemorate the 38,000 Michigan youth affected by abuse and neglect.

Substance abuse has been a known factor in child removals for years, and the recent Opioid Crisis has shed new light and conversation on the issue. According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan's drug overdose mortality rate ranked in the upper one-third in the nation with 2,053 overdose deaths involving opioids alone in 2017. To illustrate its impact on the child welfare system, half of the children removed from their family homes in the first two months of the year in Ingham County alone came from homes where substance abuse was identified. (In those cases, 19 of the 36 children came from homes where substance abuse was involved.)

Michigan's Children has created an online option for comments that will be entered into the official transcript of the CRPP at [michiganschildren.org/crpp](http://michiganschildren.org/crpp).

*Michigan's Children is a statewide independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of all children, from cradle to career.*