

HEALTH

## Crack babies give way to ‘Oxytots’

Are infants born to mothers hooked on pills at risk?

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*Pam Bondi*

Two decades after the height of the U.S. crack epidemic brought reports of infants being born addicted to cocaine, Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi wants to find out if a new trend is emerging with mothers addicted to prescription drugs.

Bondi is asking Florida lawmakers to create a special task force looking into the potential problem, as the abuse of prescription drugs continues to rise, saying that the state may find itself off guard and facing the “next crack baby epidemic,” according to CBS.

Dr. Janet Tursi, the Director of Obstetrics at Good Samaritan Medical Center, said that instances of infants born addicted to prescription drugs appears to be on the rise at her hospital, and that they are “seeing more and more... babies having the signs and symptoms of withdrawal.”

One local news station **dubbed these children** as “Oxytots” after one of the more commonly abused prescription drugs, Oxycontin.

Tursi also said education of mothers is key, as some think that because “they’ve gotten a prescription from their physician and they feel, ‘Well, he knows about it, he gave it to me, it will be okay.’”

“They don’t realize it really can affect the baby, and does affect the baby,” Tursi added.

Bondi is behind legislation that would address the issue from a public health standpoint, and create a panel that would include various state leaders including herself.

It’s not Bondi’s first foray into public health matters. After Bondi was elected as attorney general in 2010, she became the lead attorney general along with 26 others to file a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services trying to overturn the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare.