

## Music Therapy Helps Opioid-Addicted Babies as Rates Continue to Soar

*Music Therapist at Louisville Hospital Available to Address How Music Therapy Techniques are Weaning Babies Off Opioid Addiction Faster*

**SITUATION:** A recent analysis by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) estimated that nearly six out of every 1,000 infants born in the U.S. are now diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome, a set of symptoms experienced by babies exposed to drugs in the womb, most notably, opioid.

“After birth, they experience a variety of complications. Their symptoms include tremors, irritability, poor sleep and feeding, and excessive rooting,” Michael Detmer, NICU-certified music therapist at Norton Women’s and Norton Children’s hospital, said.

In a [study](#) done in 2015, the overall length of stay for NAS was 21.1 days for the 139 infants included in the study. In addition to the expensive hospital stay, it can cost upwards of [\\$60,000](#) to treat one baby after being released with treatment of medication and physical therapy.

**SOLUTION:** NICU music therapy is a growing trend to help treat opioid-addicted babies. The [therapy](#) usually takes place at the bedside and includes family whenever possible. Sessions may include gentle lullaby-style singing, guitar music, therapeutic touch and personalized lullaby writing. The therapy empowers parents to bond with their child through music and teaches them to use music to promote neurodevelopmental growth, which is important in helping premature infants reach critical developmental milestones.

One such [NICU therapy program](#) was implemented at Norton in 2015. Detmer says a new study done there on the impact of this program showed that music therapy helped lower the finnegascore, resulting to fewer symptoms and ultimately shorter hospital stays. “The goal is to get babies healthier sooner, so they can go home,” Detmer said.

**EXPERT SOURCE:** Michael Detmer has been working in music therapy for over 20 years and has been at the forefront of creating this program at Norton Women’s and Children’s Hospital in Louisville, KY. In his current role as a music therapist at Norton, Detmer sees the positive outcomes of music therapy every day.

“Parents, families and staff consistently report how infants show noticeable benefits after receiving music therapy, whether it be improved oxygen saturation levels, more motivation and endurance during feeding or increased alertness when cuddling,” Detmer said.

**CONTACT:** If you would like to speak to Michael Detmer to learn more about how NICU’s music therapy program is improving the lives of opioid-addicted babies, please contact Erin Schmidt 707-228-6426.

