

Mother Who Gives Birth to Drug Addict Faces Felony Charge

SANFORD, Fla., Dec. 16 (AP) — A woman whose son was born addicted to cocaine was charged today with child abuse and delivery of the drug to her baby, a felony drug charge that prosecutors say has never been used against a new mother.

The child, Michael Hudson, was born Nov. 13 infected with syphilis as well as addicted to cocaine, the authorities said. He has been treated and placed in a foster home awaiting adoption.

His mother, Toni Suzette Hudson, 29 years old, was arrested Thursday on a street corner known for drug sales. She was being held in the Seminole County jail in lieu of \$2,000 bond.

Other Florida prosecutors have charged mothers of addicted babies with child abuse, but never with violating drug laws, said Jeff Deen, the Seminole-Brevard Assistant State Attorney.

Charge Has 30-Year Penalty

Conviction of child abuse generally carries a sentence of no more than 60 days. The drug charge carries a maximum sentence of 30 years.

Mr. Deen said he could prosecute Ms. Hudson for delivering the drug because state law defines it simply as a transfer from one person to another. He said he planned to argue that the mother transferred the drug to Michael by ingesting it.

Ms. Hudson, who is unemployed and lives near Altamonte Springs, gave birth to Michael at Florida Hospital Altamonte, where urine tests showed the infant and mother had cocaine in their bodies. The hospital reported the case to the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services as required by law when pregnant women appear to be drug users.

An investigator for the agency, Patsy Buckley, interviewed Ms. Hudson four days after Michael was born, according to the arrest report. The mother admitted using cocaine almost daily throughout her pregnancy, the report says.

Michael's cocaine addiction was sufficient evidence for Mr. Deen to subpoena Ms. Hudson's hospital records, which showed cocaine in her body. A pediatrics expert told investigators the only way a newborn could be addicted to cocaine would be if the mother used the drug.