



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Addicted Baby's Mother Pleads No Contest**

The mother of a baby who was addicted to her narcotic-laced breast milk pleaded no contest to child endangerment and drug charges in Superior Court yesterday. Sara Jean Weller, 35, Chico, had been arrested in May by investigators from the Butte County District Attorney's Drug Endangered Children's (DEC) Program for breastfeeding her 4-month-old child while shooting up narcotics. The mother had admitted noticing the child would go through withdrawals at the same time she would when she could not get a supply of drugs to inject.

The investigators had been alerted that Weller and her husband Richard Mark Weller, 36, were injecting Dilaudid in front of their children. A search warrant was obtained for the couple's Chico home and served by officers along with social workers attached to the DEC program. Besides the 4-month-old infant, investigators and social workers also took into protective custody a 2-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy. Investigators determined that marijuana and smoking and injection devices were readily accessible to the older children and the Wellers were charged with multiple counts of child endangerment, possession of drug needles and smoking devices.

Sara will be sentenced on September 29, 2011. Sara is in residential drug treatment awaiting her sentencing. Earlier last month Richard also pleaded no contest to his child endangerment and drug charges and faces sentencing on August 18, 2011. Both face up to four years of supervised formal probation with up to one year in county jail, mandatory drug treatment, parenting classes, and fines.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey was pleased to report the baby is recovering well in foster care after having to undergo several bouts of withdrawal from the addictive drug in her mother's breast milk. He reported the other children also remain in foster care as their parents seek drug rehabilitation. "Whether the children will ever go back to the parents will be determined by the courts only after the parents have proved that they are clean and fit to parent. Even then the parents will be closely monitored." Ramsey said. "Luckily the investigator and social worker team that makes up our DEC program were able to rescue these children from this awful environment."