



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 9, 2010 Recognized as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day in Ohio, Nation

(September 2010, MEDINA COUNTY)—When a pregnant woman consumes alcohol, so does her unborn child. Each year, nearly 40,000 children are born with mental, behavioral and physical challenges resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2010). These children are born affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), which according to the U.S. Surgeon General is the leading known cause of preventable mental and birth defects.

Recognizing the gravity of FASD and the impact it has on affected children and their families, Gov. Ted Strickland has designated Sept. 9 as FASD Awareness Day in Ohio. This coincides with national FASD Awareness Day, which has occurred annually since 1999. The ninth day of the ninth month was chosen as a reminder to women to abstain from alcohol during their nine months of pregnancy.

Pam Shank, R.D., L.D., Medina County WIC Director said awareness is an important first step to preventing FASD.

“FASD is 100 percent preventable,” Ms. Shank said. “Awareness can be one of the most deciding factors in bringing about positive change. Women who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant need to know that no amount of alcohol is safe – not a single drop.”

According to SAMHSA’s 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 10.6 percent of pregnant women age 15 to 44 reported current alcohol use. In addition, 4.5 percent reported binge drinking, which is four or more drinks in a row, and 0.8 percent reported heavy drinking. The number of women who engaged in binge drinking during the first-trimester of pregnancy more than doubled in comparison to the previous survey period.

To help increase awareness of FASD and its life-long effects, the State of Ohio created a task force in 2003, which is composed of several state agencies, prevention professionals, educators and parents or caregivers of children with FASD. The task force promotes abstaining from alcohol during pregnancy to prevent FASD, urging women not to drink a single drop.



For more information and resources about FASD, please visit Ohio’s FASD initiative Web site at www.notasingledrop.org.

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