



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2008

Contact:

Gwendolyn Mitchell/Lingxia Meng
Office of Public Affairs
(408) 299-5119

Follow-up Contact:

Nancy Bain
Department of Alcohol & Drug Services
(408) 272-6565

**Community Organizations and Government Officials Call for Action to Prevent
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**

Absolutely No Alcohol during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding!

SAN JOSE, CALIF.— Today, residents and community organizations joined the Santa Clara County Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Task Force, State Assemblyman Jim Beall and County of Santa Clara Supervisor Liz Kniss in a “walkabout” from the Hall of Justice to the County Government Center to increase awareness of FASD.

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable,” said Supervisor Liz Kniss, Chair of the Board of Supervisors’ Health and Hospital Committee. “All women need to know that consuming alcoholic beverages while pregnant can have devastating affects on the fetus.”

FASD affects an estimated 40,000 infants nationwide annually – more than Spina Bifida, Down’s Syndrome and Muscular Dystrophy combined.

“Many expectant parents assume that only heavy drinking can harm their unborn child, but in reality, there is no known safe level of drinking – medical science tells us that,” said California State Assemblyman Jim Beall. “I hope today’s news conference will help raise awareness of the dangers of drinking while pregnant.”

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy can severely damage the development, structure and functioning of the fetal brain. About 1 in 12 pregnant women nationwide reported consuming alcohol and about 1 in 30 pregnant women said they had engaged in binge drinking according to the US Center for Disease Control. More than any other drug, alcohol is most commonly used by pregnant women. As a result, fetal alcohol syndrome is one of the leading known preventable causes of birth defects and developmental disabilities.

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"Not only is there no safe amount of alcohol a pregnant woman can drink, but there is no safe time during the pregnancy or during breastfeeding," said Nancy Bain, County Department of Alcohol & Drug Services. "For those women who are unable to quit on their own, we want them to know that the County of Santa Clara provides drug and alcohol treatment services."

The County of Santa Clara Department of Drug and Alcohol Services provides several different levels of FASD treatment services. Women can call the county's Gateway program at (800) 488-9919 if they need help quitting drinking during pregnancy. Gateway will refer them to a program based on the results of the screening/assessment and their location. Cost of the services is dependent on the individual's ability to afford. The service may be free to extremely low income women. For more information, go to: www.sccdads.org

About FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities and can have lifelong implications.

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