



INSTITUTE OF
HEALTH ECONOMICS
ALBERTA CANADA

MEDIA RELEASE

October 9, 2009

Panel calls for national agenda to address impact of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

EDMONTON, ALBERTA...A panel of experts, led by former Deputy Prime Minister, The Honourable Anne McLellan, is recommending a wide ranging series of actions in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, treatment and research related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The recommendations are the result of deliberations at the IHE Consensus Development Consensus on FASD: Across the Lifespan held this week.

The panel of health professionals, academics, and public representatives are calling on federal and provincial governments to develop and promote policies to help improve programs, services and outcomes for people living with FASD.

"It's time for a national agenda integrating research done and lessons learned," said McLellan. "The agenda must increase awareness of FASD and promote the development of effective prevention and treatment programs, as well as family support systems. The time for further action is now."

Recommendations include:

- A national primary prevention strategy including education about the effects and risks of alcohol and birth control;
- Pre-planned transitions from child to adult services to allow for effective wraparound services that will support individuals and families and communities at each stage of life;
- Establishing data registries in every province to increase the capacity for national screening, diagnosis, and reporting of FASD;
- Requiring messaging about FASD in pregnancy testing kits and in contraceptive packages; and
- Working with physicians and other health care providers to take advantage of teachable moments to discuss the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The IHE Consensus Development Conference on FASD was hosted by the Institute of Health Economics and the Government of Alberta with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

A draft copy of the full recommendations is available at www.ihe.ca.

-30-

Contact:
Rhonda Lothammer
Institute of Health Economics
780-448-4881 or 780-935-0382
rlothammer@ihe.ca