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## **Nurses and Midwives: Partnering to Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Launches New Resources for Clinicians and Clients**

September 9, 2020 – The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) together with the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH), the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), and the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) have launched a new website that includes tools for practice, patient education, and professional development that aim to reduce alcohol use during pregnancy and prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).

FASDs are a leading cause of birth defects and developmental disabilities in the United States and are associated with the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. FASDs are a collection of life-long diagnoses and can include physical, behavioral, and cognitive symptoms. To prevent FASDs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend people abstain from any alcohol consumption throughout pregnancy. Alcohol can even affect the development of the baby before a person knows they are pregnant.

Nurses and Midwives: Partnering to Prevent FASDs provides nurses, women’s health nurse practitioners, and midwives with the tools and resources to counsel clients about their options for reducing or eliminating alcohol use and promoting a safer and healthier pregnancy. Nurses and midwives, who see people at key points before, during, and after pregnancy, can provide their clients with fact-based information they need to make an informed choice about their alcohol use, and options to help people reduce their use or stop drinking entirely.

**“People hear a lot of mixed messages about whether it’s safe to drink alcohol during pregnancy,” says Diane King, director of the project. “But the reality is that no amount or type of alcohol at any point during pregnancy has been found to be safe.”**

The new tools and resources available at the website include links to online training and education (including options to obtain continuing education credit), downloadable toolkits and materials to promote FASD-prevention practices among colleagues, and flyers and handouts to give to clients about how alcohol can affect fetal development and have life-long impacts.

Nurse and Midwives: Partnering to Prevent FASDs is also trialing a new “plug and play” FASD curriculum to help nursing and midwifery program faculty integrate FASD-related content into their courses. While still in a “beta” version, the curriculum provides presentations, links to peer-reviewed articles, activities, and other learning modalities that faculty can use to enhance their course offering.

**“With so many professional education programs switching to online delivery in response to the pandemic, having such a curriculum available in an electronic format is so**

**practical,” explains Beth Kelsey, women’s health nurse practitioner, Assistant Professor in Muncie, Indiana and NPWH’s Director of Publications. “It’s a great way to ensure our future nursing and midwifery professionals are prepared to address alcohol use and prevent FASDs.”**

Nurses and Midwives: Partnering to Prevent FASDs is a collaboration between the University of Alaska Anchorage, the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, and the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.

To view the website and download the resources, visit [sites.google.com/view/nursesmidwivespreventfasds/home](https://sites.google.com/view/nursesmidwivespreventfasds/home).

### **About the Partners**

The National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health is the nation’s leading voice for courageous conversations about women’s health. In our clinics and in our culture, women’s health nurse practitioners champion state-of-the-science health care that holistically addresses the unique needs of women across their lifetimes. We elevate the health issues others overlook and compel attention on women’s health from providers, policymakers, and researchers. Other advanced practice registered nurses rely on us for authoritative resources and education that improve women’s health and wellness through evidence-based practice. NPWH pioneers policies to address gender disparities and forges strategic partnerships that advance health equity and holistic models of care.

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. ACNM sets the standard for excellence in midwifery education and practice in the United States and strengthens the capacity of midwives in developing countries. Our members are primary care providers for women throughout the lifespan, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health.

The Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit membership organization. Our mission is to empower and support nurses caring for women, newborns, and their families through research, education, and advocacy. For more information about AWHONN, please visit [www.awhonn.org](http://www.awhonn.org).

The Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services at the University of Alaska Anchorage is a research center that provides scientific expertise, partnerships, and resources to promote health and improve health outcomes for communities and individuals across the lifespan. CBHRS’ multi-disciplinary team of scientists, research associates, and students engage in research, evaluation, and training that addresses the most pressing community health problems both within and outside of Alaska.