Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Talking Points

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders

- Prenatal alcohol exposure causes the most serious neurobehavioral disabilities of all substances.\(^1\)
- The non-diagnostic term “FASD” includes the diagnoses of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorders (ARND), and alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD).
- Severity and types of disabilities can vary from mild to severe within each of the specific diagnostic categories.
- Includes a range of physical, behavioral, social, emotional, and learning disabilities.
- FASD-related challenges last the lifespan of the affected individual.\(^2\)
- Recent studies show that 2% to 5% of elementary school children have been prenatally exposed to alcohol.\(^3\)
- Up to 70% of children in foster care have a FASD.\(^3,4\)
- Neurobehavioral Disorder Associated with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (ND-PAE) is in the DSM-V Appendix.

Societal Impact

- Supporting one person with a FASD costs $2.0 to $2.9 million over a lifetime.\(^5\)
- U.S. spends 5.4 billion a year on expenses related to FAS alone (more if all disorders on the spectrum are considered).\(^6\)
- Estimated that up to 45% of the US corrections population has a FASD.\(^7,8\)

Services Needed

- Families and individuals need cost-effective, accessible, appropriate and constructive lifespan supports and services in their communities such as respite care, therapies (PT, OT, speech), education, and in-home supports based on the individual and family needs.
- Professionals working with children and adults who have a FASD need specific FASD-related training (teachers, social workers, physicians, allied health professionals, first responders, judges, etc.).
- Evidence-based programs such as Families Moving Forward\(^9\) and the Social Skills Training for Children with FASD\(^10\) should be funded widely as early intervention programs to prevent the development of secondary disabilities related to FASDs.

NOFAS and MCFARES

- MCFARES (Michigan Coalition for Fetal Alcohol Resources Education and Support) is the Michigan NOFAS (National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) Affiliate.
- MCFARES/NOFAS Michigan and the Michigan FASD Task Force work together to educate, empower and engage the community with FASD-related information and support.
- MCFARES/NOFAS Michigan and the Michigan FASD Task Force are unfunded entities. Funding FASD-related interventions may help reduce inpatient hospitalizations, incarceration and/or secondary disabilities and the overall cost of supporting a person who is on the fetal alcohol spectrum.

For more information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, please contact Charisse Cossu-Kowalski, MCFARES, at charisse@mcfares.org or 586-329-6722.
References for FASD Talking Points


FASD Resources

Michigan

3. Arc Michigan: www.arcmi.org
5. Children’s Trauma Assessment Center: http://wmich.edu/traumacenter

National

1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/