

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day

**Effective Date: Sunday, September 9th, 2012**

WHEREAS, Alaska's children are our best resource and asset. Protecting our children and giving them a sure footing in life should be our foremost priority at every stage of childhood and infancy; and

WHEREAS, consuming alcohol at any stage of pregnancy can cause an unborn child to develop one of a range of disorders known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs). These disorders may permanently damage a developing child; and

WHEREAS, FASDs cause a variety of physical, behavioral, and learning disabilities. Children affected by FASDs may have difficulty learning in school, interacting with others, and developing normally into adulthood. On the most severe end of the spectrum of disorders, fetal alcohol syndrome can cause infant death; and

WHEREAS, the health and social costs incurred to the public for a patient with an FASD are significant. Lifetime costs per person can be nine times higher than those of a patient without an FASD, while the annual costs to the United States' healthcare system total more than six billion dollars annually; and

WHEREAS, symptoms are not always obvious, and children with alcohol-related disorders are often undiagnosed until a child has reached school age. Early diagnoses have been shown to significantly help children with FASDs learn to cope with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, these completely preventable disorders are a matter of serious concern in Alaska, where FASDs can affect up to 126 births each year. Among states documenting alcohol-related health conditions and hospitalizations, Alaska has some of the highest rates of incidence; and

WHEREAS, on the ninth day of the ninth month of each year, we observe the great costs FASDs impose on our children and remember that mothers can protect their children from the irreversible consequences of alcohol-related birth defects by refusing to drink alcohol during the nine months of pregnancy.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim September 9, 2012 as:

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day

in Alaska, and urge Alaskans to abstain from alcohol consumption throughout the course of pregnancy, and to support pregnant family and friends in their commitment to encourage and lead by example.

Dated: September 7, 2012

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