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ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH EMPHASIZES THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROBLEM DRINKING

Women and Unborn Children at High Risk from Alcohol Use

(Columbus, Ohio) April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Drug-Free Action Alliance is participating in this national awareness campaign by bringing attention to the disease of alcoholism and emphasizing the harmful health risks associated with problem drinking.

Fewer women than men drink alcohol. However, among heavy drinkers, women surpass men in the number of problems that result from drinking. For example, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, female alcoholics have death rates 50 to 100 percent higher than those of male alcoholics, including deaths from suicides, alcohol-related accidents, heart disease, and stroke and liver cirrhosis.

In addition to significant health risks and increased trauma, legal and interpersonal difficulties, women using alcohol are confronted with dangers to their unborn child. Drinking by a pregnant woman can do irreparable harm to the fetus and may result in a set of birth defects known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Babies born with FASD may be subjected to growth deficiencies and central nervous system dysfunctions which may include low IQ or mental retardation and permanent defects to major organs. Additionally, some babies with FASD may be born with abnormal facial features.

“It is imperative for women who are pregnant to refrain from consuming alcohol,” said Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance. “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is a 100% preventable cause of mental retardation and no child need suffer these irreversible, lifelong conditions.”

Women who are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant need to know when alcohol is consumed it goes directly into the bloodstream and passes to the baby. The best time to stop drinking is when a woman decides to become pregnant. If she is currently pregnant, she needs to immediately stop drinking. There is no known safe level of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.

If you or a woman you know needs to stop drinking, there are places to receive confidential assistance to help. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can be located on the Internet at www.FindTreatment.samhsa.gov. The site offers a searchable database listing treatment providers across the country. You can search for treatment programs that specialize in adolescents, older adults, women with children and other special populations. They can assist by telephone at (800) 662-HELP. Also, the National Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome website, www.NoFas.org, includes additional detailed information on FASD.

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization providing leaders to promote safe and drug free communities throughout Ohio. More information can be obtained from the Ohio Resource Network Clearinghouse located at www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org.

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Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy
Council

www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org