
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

PROVINCE LAUNCHES NEW SUPPORTS FOR HEALTHY PREGNANCIES

VANCOUVER – New educational resources launched today will support health professionals in helping prevent substance use during pregnancy, announced Mary Polak, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport.

“The ActNow BC Healthy Choices in Pregnancy resources support women to make healthy choices during their child-bearing years,” said Polak. “Through this pillar of ActNow BC, we are working to improve the health of mothers and their babies and ultimately decrease the number of infants born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).”

The provincial Healthy Choices in Pregnancy resources and education reflect an investment of \$360,000. The launch of the resources at the Chan Centre for Family Education included a national online video-stream of the event.

Each of the resources will add value to the Healthy Choices in Pregnancy education sessions, which are available for viewing and distribution through the Healthy Choices in Pregnancy website at www.hcip-bc.org.

The four new Healthy Choices in Pregnancy resources include:

- **Double Exposure:** A review of effective interventions to support women to reduce alcohol use in the child-bearing years. The primary purpose of this resource is for use by professionals and for policy and best practice development.
- **Women and Alcohol: A Women’s Health Resource.** This booklet is available for health professionals and provides useful information about the affects of alcohol on women, risks associated with drinking and the low risk drinking guidelines. This booklet is tailored to women of child-bearing years who drink.
- **Couples and Smoking: What You Need to Know When You are Pregnant –** This is a self-help booklet is available to health professionals and designed for women and their partners about smoking during pregnancy.
- **Supporting Change: Preventing FASD:** The DVD consists of a variety of scenarios of how to discuss alcohol use by women, and clinical information from field experts of women’s health and FASD. This resource is to be used by health professionals and will enhance support for service providers working with pregnant women and women in their child-bearing years.

“BC Women’s and the BC Perinatal Health Program are very pleased to support the development of these important resources,” said Dr. Elizabeth Whynot, president of BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre. “Our goal is for all women in B.C. to have the best possible opportunity for a healthy pregnancy.”

Healthy Choices in Pregnancy provincial education and resources, including the website, are supported by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport through ActNow BC, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, the Provincial Health Services Authority and the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. Across the province, the resources will support health authorities in further developing their Healthy Choices in Pregnancy programs and services and their FASD prevention plans. This will improve health promotion and pregnancy services delivered to B.C. women.

In 2003, B.C. became the first province in Canada to create a cross-ministry, comprehensive provincial strategy for FASD. Building on this, the Province released a 10-year Provincial Plan, as well as a \$10-million FASD Action Fund, established through the Victoria Foundation, to support projects that promote FASD prevention and education, and help improve outcomes for children and youth with FASD.

ActNow BC's two provincial targets related specifically to Healthy Choices in Pregnancy include a goal to increase by 50 per cent the number of women counselled regarding alcohol use in pregnancy, and to have each health authority implement their FASD prevention strategies.

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