

I support a National FASD Framework

Government Representative Tip Sheet

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a very complex disability that crosses many different disciplines. It is not only a healthcare issue; FASD intersects with homelessness, substance use, education, criminal justice, mental health, child welfare, social services, family health, and more. People with FASD are 20 times more likely to experience a substance use challenges and over 90% of individuals with FASD will experience a least one mental health challenge in their lifetime.

FASD is challenging to recognize. As a result, it often goes undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Individuals and their families face multiple layers of stigma that impact their ability to access suitable supports, quality education, stable employment, and appropriate care. FASD is a unique disability, socially rooted in its cause and our cultural relationship with alcohol and is often intergenerational in nature.

Canada is a world leader in FASD research, but this research is not always put into practice at the federal level. Due to the complicated nature of the disability a coordinated approach to prevention, diagnosis, intervention, and lifetime support is needed. Many sectors of Government (such as health and justice) require the resources, and political will, to work together to ensure that the unique needs of Canadians with FASD are met. **That is why we need a National FASD Framework.**

FASD Facts

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a diagnostic term used to describe impacts on the brain and body of people prenatally exposed to alcohol.
- Individuals with FASD will experience some degree of challenges in their daily living, and need support with motor skills, physical health, learning, memory, attention, communication, emotional regulation, and social skills to reach their full potential.
- Each individual with FASD is unique and has areas of both strengths and challenges
- FASD is a lifelong disability. Early and effective interventions and diagnosis are important to improving outcomes.
- The rates of suicide ideation in teens is 35.2%, with 13% reporting a least one serious suicide attempt in the last year.
- People with FASD are 20 times more likely to have substance use challenges than the general population. Rates of substance use challenges are 35% among youth with FASD.
- FASD is a highly stigmatized disability with stigma impacting individuals with FASD, their families, and women who use substances during pregnancy
- According to US data, almost half of all pregnancies are unplanned and people don't recognize they are pregnant until on average 5.5 weeks into a pregnancy.

What can you do as a government representative to show your support?

- Commit to supporting a National FASD Framework (Bill S-253)
- Make an effort to learn more about FASD in your area and discipline
- Speak to members of your party and other government representatives about the need for a National FASD Framework
- Show support for a #NationalFASDFramework on social media

Example Social Media Posts

4% of Canadians have #FASD. Early interventions and diagnosis can help. This is why I support a #NationalFASDFramework.

4% of Canadians have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), more than autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome combined. That's why I support a #NationalFASDFramework.

1.5 million Canadians have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (#FASD), but with proper supports and resources, people with FASD can succeed. That's why I support a #NationalFASDFramework.

We need a #NationalFASDFramework to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Canada. Increasing funding to our healthcare system is not enough.

About CanFASD

CanFASD is Canada's first national Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) research network. CanFASD works collaboratively with researchers and partners across the nation to address complexities of FASD. Our mission is to produce and maintain national, collaborative research for all Canadians, leading to prevention strategies and improved support services for people affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

For more information, please contact:

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