

STATEMENT

New report emphasizes urgent need for coordinated approach from governments to address FASD in Canada

(June 25, 2025) The CanFASD Research Network commends the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) for its comprehensive and rigorous 2025 assessment report, *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Canada: Current Knowledge and Policy* and would like to extend our great appreciation to the Public Health Agency of Canada for initiating this much-needed work. This report provides a thorough examination of the complex public health and social challenges posed by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), addressing critical areas such as prevention, diagnosis, data collection, and supports across the lifespan.

We are particularly pleased to see the significant inclusion of CanFASD's research and expertise, including the work of our diverse community of experts and individuals with living experience, reflected throughout the report, underscoring our organization's pivotal role in advancing FASD knowledge and practice in Canada. However, it is deeply disappointing to note that, despite the progress highlighted, many of the systemic challenges identified over two decades ago persist.

More than twenty years ago, the 2005 *FASD: A Framework for Action* report was released. This was a "statement of shared commitment among the federal government and provinces and territories to address what was then becoming recognised as a significant public health concern". FASD remains a significant public health concern, as evidenced by this 2025 report. Individuals with living experience, including individuals with FASD, their families, and their larger communities remain largely unsupported, often experiencing poor outcomes in health, education, employment, and social inclusion due to inadequate resources, systemic barriers and insufficient funding. The lack of meaningful advancement and consistency in policy implementation, resource allocation, and intersectoral coordination across the country highlights an urgent need for renewed commitment.

FASD demands prioritization at all levels of government. We call on the Government of Canada to make FASD a national priority by designating appropriate resources to implement the actionable suggestions outlined in the CAHS report. Furthermore, we urge the government to leverage and fund CanFASD's established expertise, extensive

network, and proven track record to drive meaningful change and foster collaboration among the diversity of interest-holders in the Canadian FASD community. Our successes in these endeavours are heavily featured throughout this document.

There is an urgent need for action now. We and they cannot afford to wait another 20 years for these critical changes to take effect. Together, we can build on the foundation laid by the CAHS report and create a future where individuals with FASD and their communities are fully supported to thrive.

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