

MEDIA RELEASE

Experts and advocates call to address urgent gaps in FASD support and care across Canada

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This September, experts and advocates call for urgent action on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), an under-supported disability in Canada. They are backed by the results of a recent [report](#) commissioned by the Public Health Agency of Canada and completed by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences showing that people with FASD continue to face serious systemic barriers in accessing the support and care they need.

The report identifies 28 key findings related to challenges in:

- educating the public about prenatal alcohol exposure,
- assessing and diagnosing FASD,
- gathering national epidemiological information, and
- providing appropriate supports for people with FASD and their families.

“This report validates what the FASD community has been saying for years,” says Kathy Unsworth, Executive Director of the Canada FASD Research Network (CanFASD). “Without the right supports in place, people with FASD struggle to have their needs met and often end up in systems that are not equipped to support them. We need collective, cross-sector action to make sure everyone has the opportunity to thrive. At CanFASD, we are working to build those partnerships, educate the workforce, and establish best practices for prevention, diagnosis, and support to ensure our community has the support they need. But we can’t do it alone. This FASD Month, we call on everyone to take action.”

FASD is a lifelong disability that impacts the brain and body of people exposed to alcohol during fetal development. It affects every aspect of community life, intersecting with health care, education, justice, and social services. Addressing it demands a united, cross-sector approach.

September marks FASD Awareness Month. This year’s theme is “*Everyone Plays a Part: Take Action!*”. On September 9 – International FASD Awareness Day – more than 35 landmarks across Canada will be lit in red to raise awareness and celebrate the strength and resilience of those impacted by FASD.

Shana Mohr, Training Manager at the FASD Network of Saskatchewan says: “FASD Awareness Day serves as an important reminder to show how we all play a part - whether we're sharing positive awareness, promoting healthy pregnancies, or supporting someone with FASD. Every action truly counts. This day also provides a powerful chance to honor resilience, celebrate strengths, and embrace the beautiful diversity of people with FASD in our communities. Seeing our community unite in support gives us renewed hope for a future where awareness replaces stigma, and acceptance replaces misunderstanding.”

Advocates hope the awareness will extend beyond September. Leaders in the field will gather in Toronto this October for the Canada FASD Conference, a national event to share solutions and advance research and best practice on FASD.

About FASD:

FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It is a lifelong disability that affects the brain and body of people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. Each person with FASD has both strengths and challenges and will need special supports to help them succeed with many different parts of their daily lives. Find out more about the disability on the [CanFASD website](#).

Media Contact:

Fiona Binns
Communications Coordinator
fiona.binns@canfasd.ca