Mandatory Point of Purchase Messaging on Alcohol and Pregnancy

Noting that increasing public awareness about the risks of drinking during pregnancy is a key element of a comprehensive, effective FASD prevention strategy, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has published the “State Action Guide: Mandatory Point-of-Purchase Messaging on Alcohol and Pregnancy.” The CSPI believes that point-of-purchase warning signs that provide information about alcohol and birth defects are an important part of efforts to reduce Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). While CSPI notes that warning posters alone may not be sufficient to change alcohol-related behaviors such as consumption, sales, and providing, they can help to increase knowledge and beliefs about the health consequences of alcohol use for women who are pregnant or who may become pregnant. The display of such information in alcohol establishments provides health information where it is likely to be seen by potential alcohol users and purchasers, according to CSPI.

Posting alcohol warning signs at locations where alcohol is sold has been required in some states, including Georgia, since 1983. According to CSPI, as of January 2008, twenty-three states and numerous localities had enacted laws mandating point-of-purchase warning signs. A growing number of state legislatures have recognized the need to reinforce and expand public awareness efforts on the risks of drinking during pregnancy, as reported by CSPI. In a 2007-2008 policy statement, the Health Committee of the National Conference on State Legislatures recommended that “Special efforts should be made to warn pregnant women of the dangers of smoking, drug and alcohol use during pregnancy.” Please see http://www.ncsl.org/statefed/HEALTH.HTM
For further information regarding mandatory point-of-purchase messaging on alcohol and pregnancy, please contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at www.cspinet.org/alcohol or alcproject@cspinet.org For more information about alcohol use during pregnancy and the prevention of FASD, please contact Karen Kuehn Howell, Ph.D., at the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Project, Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 1256 Briarcliff Road, N.E., Suite 309W, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306. You can also phone us at 404-712-9800 or visit our website at http://www.emory.edu/MSACD

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