

Legislators Address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders 2014

This session, the Alaska State Legislature passed several pieces of legislation that put a spotlight on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in Alaska. The items listed below are all currently awaiting signature by the Governor before becoming enacted into law:

SCR 13 - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders by Senator Pete Kelly

This resolution asks the governor to establish and support programs that address FASD, including rapid screening in the Department of Corrections, expanding residential substance abuse treatment for pregnant women, and supporting a public relations campaign.

SCR 14 - Regional Best Practices Model by Senator Pete Kelly

This resolution encourages the development of citizen networks to create positive community and social norms for prevention of FASD, and regional best practices models that address health and social service challenges. It also encourages the governor to support the use of regional best practices models to address health and social services challenges using more effective and cost-efficient methods.

SB 64 - Omnibus Crime Bill by Senator John Coghill

This bill includes several provisions that address recidivism, including language that would require the Department of Corrections to provide “necessary assessment or screening of the risks and needs of offenders who may be vulnerable to harm, exploitation, or recidivism as a result of fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or brain-based disorder.”

FY15 Budget Items

- Added \$500,000 for a statewide FASD public relations/awareness campaign;
- Added \$120,000 for a pilot project in DOC to screen and serve people with FASD in a culturally-appropriate manner;
- Added \$600,000 to First Alaskans Institute to develop Natural Helpers network;

- Added \$400,000 to University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies for pilot project related to testing and formative evaluation of methods to prevent FASD;

Empowering Hope

In 2013-14, Senator Pete Kelly, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, convened a group of leaders to address FASD, calling the effort “Empowering Hope,” an initiative to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders in Alaska. Their recommendations include:

- *Support programs designed to eradicate FASD from Alaska.*
- *Support a public awareness campaign designed to inform, move, and motivate state residents in an effort to transform social norms regarding fetal exposure to alcohol.*
- *Support expanding residential substance abuse treatment services for women who are pregnant and concurrently suffering from drug/alcohol addiction.*
- *Support developing and using a screening tool that will effectively and quickly screen for FASD, something particularly needed within the Department of Corrections.*
- *Support developing a community network of “Natural Helpers” who actively help create positive social norms in Alaska communities.*
- *Support strategies that minimize the risk of prenatal exposure to alcohol, and promote programs that reduce the time between conception and knowledge of the pregnancy.*

Items related to FASD from previous legislatures:

- *SB 151 – FASD as a Mitigating Factor (2012)*
- *SB 127 – FASD Awareness Day (2012)*