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**Contact:** Virali Modi-Parekh, Strategic Communications Director

510-986-8975

Virali.Modi-Parekh@ucsf.edu

## **New Research Shows Pregnancy-Specific Alcohol Policies are Ineffective, Harm Public Health**

San Francisco, CA – As we see an increase in policies that regulate pregnancy and increased pregnancy criminalization in a post-Roe world, new research from Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health ([ANSIRH](#)) published in *JAMA Open Network* shows that **pregnancy-specific alcohol policies that regulate pregnant people’s substance use are ineffective when it comes to improving infant and maternal health. Some may ultimately harm public health and undermine pregnant people’s access to health care.**

“Our research shows that policies that police pregnant people’s use of alcohol and drugs just don’t work and, in fact, may harm the pregnant person or their child,” said **Dr. Sarah Roberts, study author and professor at ANSIRH.** “More than ever, we need policies grounded in science that center the needs of pregnant people and their children to improve their wellbeing.”

Researchers assessed nine state-level pregnancy-specific alcohol policies and outcome data from private insurance claims. The study found that most pregnancy-specific alcohol policies were not associated with decreased infant injuries or improvements in infant or maternal health. Policies that require reporting for Child Protective Services purposes or for child abuse/neglect purposes had no effect on infants’ health, while other **reporting requirements were associated with increased infant injuries.** This research also found that Mandatory Warning Signs Policies were related to increased infant injuries and worse maternal health. The frequency of infant injuries and adverse infant and maternal health outcomes shows that infants and birthing people face health burdens, and that these policies do not reduce them.

"This study adds to the mounting evidence showing that these policies are failing. Healthcare must be built on a foundation of compassion and evidence-based approaches that supports parents and their children, rather than systems that lead to punitive investigations, family separation, and trauma," said **Dana Sussman, Acting Executive Director of Pregnancy Justice.**

The study findings are consistent with [previous ANSIRH research](#) which finds that pregnancy-specific alcohol and drug policies are not associated with improved health outcomes, and these policies are not meeting their intended goal.

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*Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH), based at the University of California, San Francisco, conducts rigorous scientific research on complex issues related to reproductive health in the United States and internationally. ANSIRH provides much-needed evidence for active policy debates and legal battles around reproductive health issues. To learn more, please visit [www.ansirh.org](http://www.ansirh.org).*