

A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO ADDRESSING ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN PREGNANCY

Harms related to substance abuse during pregnancy can come both from substance use itself and from policy responses to alcohol and drug use. Current alcohol/pregnancy & drug/pregnancy policies harm rather than help.

Policy makers should consider the possibility of adverse public health impacts before expanding existing policies to new substances or adopting existing policies in new states. Specifically, they may not want to expand current alcohol/pregnancy policies (specifically, Mandatory Warning Signs) to cover new substances (such as marijuana).

Policy makers and public health professionals should consider:

- 1 Building new alcohol/pregnancy and drug/pregnancy policies from the ground up by engaging with the best available research evidence, clinical and public health expertise, and women who use alcohol and/or drugs during pregnancy.



- 2 Working with pregnant women who use alcohol and drugs to develop programs and policies that meet their needs.



- 3 Recognizing that effective general population alcohol and drug policies, such as regulations on where alcohol can be sold, can also improve health outcomes related to substance use during pregnancy, and consider strengthening these types of policies.

