



## FAS/D Prevention Pregnancy Test Dispenser Messaging Study

### Background

Alaska has the **highest incidence rate** of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in the United States with **over 120** diagnosed every year.<sup>1</sup> According to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, each child diagnosed with FAS/D will cost the State of Alaska **\$850,000 to \$4.2 million** from age 0-18. Alcohol use during pregnancy is **the leading preventable cause** of birth defects and developmental disabilities in the United States. Unfortunately, many women do not know they are pregnant when consuming alcohol. **Over half** of all pregnancies in Alaska **are unintended**.<sup>2</sup>

### Study Hypothesis and Design

The study hypothesized that linking FAS/D education messages with pregnancy test dispensers in bars/restaurants serving alcohol would promote awareness of FAS/D risks associated with consuming alcohol while pregnant. The study was designed to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the feasibility and utility of this strategy.

- Matched Pairs design [Dispenser + Poster sites were compared to Poster only sites] in seven communities across Alaska (Anchorage/Fairbanks + Juneau; Homer/Dillingham; and Kodiak/Nome).
- Baseline and six-month follow-up survey data documenting FAS/D knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors was collected.

### Results

- A significant sample size of **2,147 women** participated in the study with a follow-up response rate of 61%.
- Over **10,000 pregnancy tests** were distributed throughout the study.
- **576 women** reported they *may have been pregnant* in the last 6 months, **70%** reported consuming alcohol.
- **95 women** respondents reported they *were currently pregnant*. **18%** reported they **still** consume alcohol. The national average is 7%.<sup>3</sup>
- **42 women** reported **learning they were pregnant** as the *result* of taking a pregnancy test from a dispenser.
- The pregnancy test dispenser group **scored significantly higher** than the poster only group, indicating a *better understanding* of the FAS/D risks and harms.
- The pregnancy test dispenser group also **significantly decreased** their drinking behaviors compared to the poster only group.

### Conclusions

★ *Data suggests combining FAS/D education messaging with a pregnancy test dispenser is an **effective** FAS/D prevention messaging strategy.*



Dispenser + Poster Display and Associated Condom Dispenser

### Recommendations

- 1) Expand the use of pregnancy test dispensers as an FAS/D prevention messaging strategy.
- 2) Promote efforts addressing social norms related to alcohol misuse and FAS/D prevention.
- 3) Clarify server's right to refuse service policies related to providing alcohol to pregnant women.
- 4) Utilize the newly developed Windsor-Van Wyck FAS/D Risk Assessment Tool in other targeted venues.
- 5) Support follow-up longitudinal studies with the cohort of women participants (2,147).

<sup>1</sup> Alaska Department of Health & Social Services (2010) FASD Fact Sheet.

<sup>2</sup> Kost, K. Unintended Pregnancy Rates at the State Level.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Disease Control BRFSS Data