

**HCR**

**6**



House District 36  
 Alaina  
 Akan  
 Allakaket  
 Aniak  
 Anvik  
 Arctic Village  
 Beaver  
 Bettles  
 Birch Creek  
 Canyon Village  
 Central  
 Chalkyitsik  
 Chicken  
 Chistochina  
 Chitina  
 Chuathbaluk  
 Circle  
 Circle Hot Springs  
 Coldfoot  
 Copper Center  
 Copperville  
 Crooked Creek  
 Dena Lake  
 Dry Creek  
 Eagle  
 Eagle Village  
 Evansville  
 Fort Yukon  
 Galena  
 Galeton  
 Grayling  
 Gulkana  
 Healy Lake  
 Holy Cross  
 Hughes  
 Huslia  
 Kaltag  
 Kotukuk  
 Lime Village  
 Livengood  
 Lake Minchumina  
 Lower Kalskag  
 Manley  
 Marshall  
 McCarthy  
 McGrath  
 Medfra  
 Mentasta  
 Minto  
 Nabesna  
 Nenana  
 Nulato  
 Northway  
 Nulato  
 Pale Station  
 Rampart  
 Red Devil  
 Ruby  
 Russian Mission  
 Shageluk  
 Siana  
 Sleetmute  
 Stevens Village  
 Stony River  
 Takona  
 Tanadana  
 Tanana  
 Tetli  
 Tetlin  
 Tiki  
 Tikiyahuk  
 Tuntut  
 Upper Kalskag  
 Venetie  
 Wiseman

# Representative Irene K. Nicholia

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*Resources  
 Rules  
 Military and Veterans Affairs  
 World Trade and State/Federal Relations*

## SPONSOR STATEMENT House Concurrent Resolution No. 6

HCR 6 recognizes both Mother's Day week of May 11-17, 1997 and Father's Day week of June 15-21, 1997 as Alcohol-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) related birth defects include permanent growth retardation, physical malformations, and permanent central nervous system damage, including developmental delays, learning disabilities, behavioral problems and mental retardation.

- FAS is the number one known cause of mental retardation in the United States, and one of the three leading causes of birth defects.
- Each year over 40,000 American children are born with defects because their mothers drank alcohol during their pregnancies.
- The effects of FAS never go away. People with FAS live with their disabilities for their entire lives.
- There is no known safe amount of alcohol for a pregnant woman. When a woman drinks, the alcohol passes directly through the placenta to the baby.
- It is estimated that the lifetime cost per FAS birth in Alaska is \$1.4 million.
- Fathers have an equal responsibility to prevent FAS children from being born. HCR 6 encourages them to remain sober during the pregnancy, as well.

Today we have the opportunity to make an impact in the area of FAS by both improving quality of life and by promoting cost effective prevention. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is 100% preventable. Let's work together to send a message to the public about the dangers of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

I strongly urge you to support HCR 6.



House District 36

- Alatna
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- Dot Lake
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- Evansville
- Fort Yukon
- Gakona
- Galeton
- Graveling
- Gulkana
- Healy Lake
- Holy Cross
- Hughes
- Huslia
- Katag
- Koyukuk
- Lame Village
- Livengood
- Lake Minchumina
- Lower Kalslag
- Manley
- Marshall
- McCarthy
- McGrath
- Medfra
- Mentasta
- Minto
- Nabesna
- Nemana
- Nikolai
- Northway
- Nulato
- Obu Station
- Rampart
- Red Devil
- Ruby
- Ruslan Mission
- Shageluk
- Sitka
- Sleetmute
- Stevens Village
- Stony River
- Talkeena
- Tanadgaa
- Tanana
- Tetcho
- Tetke
- Tok
- Toksook
- Tovuk
- Upper Kalslag
- Veneta
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**TO: Representative Ivan Ivan, Chair  
House CRA Committee**

**FROM: Representative Irene Nicholia**

**DATE: February 3, 1997**

**RE: Scheduling of HCR 6**

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I respectfully request a hearing for HCR 6, "Relating to Alcohol-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week," in the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee. Attached you will find the necessary support materials for this Resolution.

As you are aware, this program has been going on for the past several years, and it is time again this year to lend our support to the Department for their education and awareness program. Thank you for your support.

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HCR 6

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Office of the Governor  
 Title: "Relating to Alcohol-Related Birth Defects" BRU: Executive Operations  
 Awareness Week: \_\_\_\_\_ Component: Executive Office  
 Sponsor: Representatives Nicholas Grussendorf  
 Requester: House Community & Regional Affairs COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 6

**Expenditures/Revenues**

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )						
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**FUND SOURCE**

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: \$ 0.0

**POSITIONS**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Michael A. Nizich, Administrative Director  
 Division: Division of Administrative Services  
 Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]  
 Agency: Office of the Governor

Phone: 465-3876  
 Date: 2/5/97  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

LL NO. HCR 6

Revision Date: 02/03/97  
 Title: Relating to Alcohol-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week  
 Sponsor: Rep. Nicholas  
 Requestor: (1) CRA

Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services  
 BRU: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services  
 Component: ADA Administration  
 COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 302  
 See also (SN#): \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenditures/Revenues:**

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGES IN REVENUES						
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**FUND SOURCE**

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (please specify)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: 0.0

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Services provided by the Division are covered by the Division's current budget.

Prepared by: Loren Jones  
 Division: Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Phone: 465-2071  
 Date: 02/03/97

Approved by Commissioner: Karen Perdue  
 Agency: Department of Health & Social Services

Date: 2/3/97

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Position Paper  
HCR 6  
Alcohol Related Birth Defects Awareness Week

The intent of this House Concurrent Resolution is to encourage widespread involvement and participation in Alcohol Related Birth Defects Awareness Week. By proclaiming May 11 - 17, 1997 as the Mother's Day Campaign and the week following Father's Day June 15 - 21, 1997 as the designated awareness weeks, we acknowledge the role of both parents in preventing the nation's leading known cause of preventable birth defects.

The impact of this Resolution is to increase community understanding and awareness of the preventable nature of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects. Pregnant women who drink alcohol risk having children with permanent developmental delays, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems. These children are often unable to live totally independent lives.

This Resolution also recognizes that the sobriety of fathers is important to the well-being of their children and the healthy functioning of their families. This recognition of the role of fathers is should be strongly endorsed in this years public awareness campaign.

The two designated weeks is an opportunity to bring an important message to the members of our statewide community. It can also serve as a spring board for families, churches, agencies, and communities to take positive action against the further incidence of the State's leading preventable birth defect.

The Department of Health and Social Services strongly supports House Concurrent Resolution 6 to designate these two weeks as Alcohol Related Birth Defects Weeks.

Recommended by *Loren A. Jones* Date 2/3/97  
Loren A. Jones, Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Approved by *Karen Perdue* Date 2/3/97  
Karen Perdue, Commissioner



## FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)?

FAS is a cluster of physical and mental birth defects common in babies whose mothers have consumed alcoholic beverages during pregnancy. Babies born with FAS have growth deficiency, central nervous system damage (permanent brain damage), head and facial deformities, and severe behavioral problems. Other body organs may also be affected, for example, heart defects occur in about half the cases of FAS.<sup>1</sup> FAS is now the leading cause of mental retardation in the nation and the only one that is 100% preventable.<sup>2</sup> The diagnosis of FAS is a very difficult one to make and therefore must be done by a qualified and experienced physician, usually a dysmorphologist.

### What is ARND?

Alcohol Related Neurological Defects (ARND) (a term now being recommended to replace Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE)) is used to emphasize physical and behavioral defects attributed to prenatal alcohol exposure such as small head size, abnormalities in the structure of the brain, poor motor skills, hearing loss, and poor eye-hand coordination. A disruption in behavioral and/or cognitive patterns often seen in these individuals can manifest themselves as learning difficulties, poor school performance, impulsivity, poor social interactions/skills, difficulty in understanding, comprehending and expressing language, poor capacity for abstraction, poor math skills, and problems in memory, attention, and judgment. ARND is inclusive of FAS and provides a category for those whose birth defects do not fully meet the FAS case definition. Most individuals who have ARND do not have the facial deformities and therefore appear normal. The earlier the identification and intervention for these individuals the greater their potential.<sup>3</sup>

### Why and how does alcohol affect the fetus?

Alcohol is a teratogen. A teratogen is the agent which causes deformities in the fetus during pregnancy. Alcohol consumed during pregnancy is the cause of FAS and ARND. Alcohol readily crosses the placenta barrier and is distributed throughout the fetus' body. It is absorbed by the water in the cells of the fetus' tissues and is found in the amniotic fluid which surrounds the fetus. Fetal tissue, with a high water content, is the brain, liver, pancreas, kidney, lung, thymus and heart. The fetus is too immature to metabolize the alcohol by itself. The fetus must therefore rely on its mother for the elimination of the

alcohol. During this process the fetus absorbs the alcohol which the mother consumes, voids alcohol into the amniotic fluid where it is ingested again by the fetus, and waits for the alcohol to be eliminated from its system by the mother. Therefore, the concentration of alcohol in the amniotic fluid is often two times higher than in the mother. This means that the alcohol remains in the cells of the fetus twice as long as in the mother's which insures longer exposure to the teratogen which in turn increases the risk of further damage to that fetus.<sup>4</sup>

### How much is too much alcohol?

There is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Women are advised to abstain from alcohol (and other drugs including over-the-counter medications) when planning a pregnancy, during pregnancy and while breast-feeding. What may be considered a casual drink by the mother may become a lifetime disability for her child.<sup>5</sup>

### Does FAS ever go away or get better?

**NO!** FAS is not reversible. Individuals with FAS do not catch up mentally or physically to normal people. The sooner the identification of FAS/ARND is made, however, the more opportunities there are to assist the individual to realize his/her full potential.<sup>6</sup>

### Can FAS be passed from one generation to the next?

FAS cannot be passed from one generation to the next because it is not a genetically linked birth defect. It is caused by the mother's consumption of alcoholic beverages during pregnancy. Women who have themselves been identified as FAS do not produce FAS children unless they also drink during their pregnancy.<sup>7</sup>

### How many babies are born in Alaska with FAS?

At this time there are no reliable statistics which reflect the incidence of FAS in the state of Alaska. We do know that there are babies being born with FAS, but the exact figures are not available. Since FAS has recently been made a reportable condition in Alaska accurate and reliable surveillance data will be available in the future.<sup>8</sup>

### What is the economic impact of FAS?

A former Alaskan senator estimated the cost for a lifetime of services to just one FAS child at 1.4 million dollars. The exact figures are almost impossible to determine at this time, however the more information researchers are able to gather about FAS in Alaska the clearer our understanding of the costs involved become. No matter what the costs are

these expenditures could be eliminated entirely if women did not consume alcohol during pregnancy.

### **What happens when an FAS infant reaches adolescence or adulthood?**

As the FAS child grows up the facial deformities become less pronounced, but the individual usually remains short in stature and often has a small head size. The average FAS adolescent has an IQ in the mildly mentally retarded range. However, they also have a wide range of functioning from severe retardation to intelligence within normal limits. These individuals eventually reach a plateau academically and in daily functioning, but problems grow more serious as attention deficits, poor judgment, and impulsivity create obstacles to employment and stable living. These individuals are described as innocent, immature, and easily victimized. They are at risk for serious life adjustment problems, including depression, alcohol abuse, and pregnancy.<sup>9</sup>

### **What role do men play in FAS/ARND?**

It is the mother's alcohol consumption during pregnancy which causes FAS/ARND. However, men do play an active role in the health of their offspring. Scientists are finding that when certain drugs (including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine) enter the testicles through the bloodstream,<sup>10</sup> a man's sperm count is lowered and the sperm's motility or ability to swim is diminished.<sup>11</sup> Damaged sperm can cause a pregnancy to end in miscarriage. Drugs can interfere with reproduction by changing the process by which sperm are selected for fertilizing the egg. The drugs in a man's system may lead to lower birth weight, birth defects or serious illnesses for the child after birth.<sup>12</sup> Even smoking a half a pack of cigarettes a day can reduce the sperm count by as much as twenty percent (20%).<sup>13</sup> A father's smoking before conception may result in lower birth weight and an increased risk of life threatening diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, and brain cancer. There is also an increased risk of fathering a child with a cleft lip, cleft palate, water-on-the-brain, or heart defects.<sup>14</sup> The use of cocaine by men may be linked to some mental problems in their offspring. A new study reported in the June, 1996 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry suggests that alcoholism in fathers increased their offspring's risk of both alcoholism and mood disorders--in particular major depression and bipolar depression. Sperm can also be adversely effected by environmental and hazardous materials often encountered in the workplace and home. If you are anticipating either starting or continuing a family see you doctor if you work around hazardous materials.<sup>15</sup>

Men are advised to stop using alcohol and other drugs at least three months before attempting fertilization. It is recommended that men remain alcohol/drug free throughout the pregnancy in support of the woman's efforts to stay alcohol/drug-free.<sup>16</sup>

## Who can I call for more information and resources?

For more information and statewide resources call the FAS Coordinator, Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse at 1-800-478-7677.

### Other resources:

- Access Alaska (907) 248-4777 TTY/TDD Machine Access (907) 248-0639
- Disability Law Center at 1-800-478-1234
- FAS Statewide Parents Support Group 1-800-770-5437
- Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (or your local Community Mental Health Center) (907) 561-4247
- PARENTS, Inc. 1-800-478-7678
- Stone Soup Group at (907) 561-3701

### References

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<sup>1</sup>Institute of Medicine. "Summary: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Diagnosis, Epidemiology, Prevention and Treatment," pp. 17-20 and Table 2. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. 1996.

<sup>2</sup>U S Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Public Health Service, "Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs May Harm the Unborn," pp 17. DHHS Publication No.(ADM) 90-1711, printed 1990.

<sup>3</sup>R. J. Sokol, Clarren, S.K. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, "Guidelines for Use of Terminology Describing the Impact of Prenatal Alcohol on the Offspring." 1989; 13:597-598.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas L. Pinckert, M.D. George Town University Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine/Genetics. "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome" lecture outline, pp. 18. (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Neonatal Network, 1992; 11:47-49.)

<sup>5</sup>op. cit. "Alcohol, Tobacco &...", pp. 15-19.

<sup>6</sup>B. G. Barbour. "Is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Completely Irreversible?" MCN. 1989; 14:44-46

<sup>7</sup>op.cit. "Is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome completely...", 14:44-46.

<sup>8</sup>Center for Disease Control. "Linking Multiple Data Sources in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Surveillance--Alaska. Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report 1993b; 42:312-314.

<sup>9</sup>op.cit. "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome" lecture outline, pp. 18.

<sup>10</sup>U. S. News and World Report, December 14, 1992; pp. 94-96.

<sup>11</sup>Alcohol Health and Research World, Winter 1987/1988, Gladys Freider, Ph.D., "Effects on Future Generations of Paternal Exposure to Alcohol and Other Drugs."

<sup>12</sup>Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), October 9, 1991. Vol. 266, No. 14, "Demonstration of Specific Binding of Cocaine to Human Spermatozoa."

<sup>13</sup>Greater New York March of Dimes; "A Guide for Fathers-to-be," 1992.

<sup>14</sup>Greater New York March of Dimes Press Release, "Male Environmental Exposures. An Important Cause of Birth Defects?" December, 1991.

<sup>15</sup>op.cit. "Effects on Future Generations..."

<sup>16</sup>Iowa Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) Standards for General Industry, 1991.