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## **Historic Agreement Heralds New Era for Prevention and Treatment of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**

WASHINGTON – At an historic summit hosted by the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS), national experts – including for the first time representatives from the Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and Health Canada – came together to produce and sign onto a unanimous agreement on terminology for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

“There is so much confusion around what to call the broader effects of prenatal alcohol exposure when a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome cannot be made,” said summit co-chair Dr. José Cordero, Director of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. “Acceptance of this new terminology will go a long way toward getting individuals with the wide range of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders the recognition, treatment, and services they need.”

Summit participants stressed the importance of having a term that communicates the range of issues surrounding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. “The terminology should serve the individual with the disorder, their parents and those who seek services for the affected individual,” said summit co-chair Dr. Kenneth Warren, Office of Scientific Affairs Director, National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. NOFAS Chairman, Terry Lierman, expanded on this by saying, “Our chief concern is that parents, families, and public policy officials speak with one voice when it comes to treatment and prevention.”

The Consensus Statement is as follows:

*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. The term FASD is not intended for use as a clinical diagnosis.*

For a full list of summit participants, contact Adam Litle, NOFAS Director of Government Affairs, at (202) 785-4585.

**NOFAS** is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1990 dedicated to eliminating birth defects caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy and improving the quality of life for those individuals and families affected by FASD.