

## Goals Of The FASD Team

- \* To identify characteristics of FASD in persons as early as possible.
- \* To improve quality of life for those individuals and for people in their environment by referral to appropriate services within their communities
- \* To educate everyone about the risks of alcohol use by women of childbearing age.
- \* To support the referral of birth mothers to appropriate substance abuse treatment services.
- \* To prevent Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and other effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.
- \* To show that with early identification and diagnosis, affected persons can take part in their world in a new and better way.



## Basic Facts about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

**FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)** is a lifelong yet completely preventable set of physical, mental and neurobehavioral birth defects associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy. It is the leading known preventable cause of mental retardation and birth defects.

**FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders)** 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.

In Texas, 7 infants per 1,000 are born each year with FAS, about 2,500 infants per year in the state, and it is estimated that over 42,000 children (birth to 18 years) with FAS are currently living in the state. There are even more individuals affected by FASD.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT FAS?

FAS and other alcohol related effects can be prevented if a woman doesn't drink while pregnant. There is no known safe level of alcohol a woman can drink during pregnancy. So, if a woman is trying to get pregnant or thinks she might be pregnant, she should stop drinking right away.

## The FASD Diagnostic Team at MHMRA of Harris County

The FASD Diagnostic Team of MHMRA of Harris County is an inter-disciplinary assessment team of professionals who provide diagnostic and referral services for individuals suspected of having prenatal alcohol exposure.

### The Team consists of:

- \* Melinda B. Benjumea, LPA, LPC  
Psychologist/ Program Director
- \* Linda Schmalstieg, M. D.  
Psychiatrist
- \* Betty Price, M.S. CCC-SLP  
Speech & Language Pathologist
- \* Debra Salser, LCSW  
Social Worker
- \* Jeanne Añorga,  
Senior Administrative Assistant



## WHO CAN RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE FASD TEAM?

- \* Harris County Residents who are suspected of having prenatal alcohol exposure,
- \* Ages 3 years through Adulthood.
- \* Referrals from outside of Harris County are given individual consideration

## HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES

Contact the MHMRA Call Center at 713-970-7070 and ask for a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, or "FASD" assessment. You will be referred to the team social worker, Debra Salsler, who will follow up with you to begin the process.

## FEES

When you arrive, you must consult with a financial counselor who will determine whether co-payments or other fees apply and whether MHMRA is a part of your Insurance Provider Network.

## PROCESS

Before the day of the appointment, the team will ask you to provide as much information as possible on previous assessments. This information will help the team decide what additional testing they will need to conduct.

**\*\* Please plan on spending most of the day, as the assessment process is thorough.**

## Rights Protection Office

If you feel you have been unfairly treated, have been denied needed services or accommodation by the Mental Health Retardation Authority of Harris County (MHMRA), or if you are unable to resolve a complaint regarding services with your MHMRA staff person, or their supervisor, you may contact the following Rights Protection Offices:

### Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County

Robert Stakem, Jr.

Rights Protection Officer

P. O. Box 25381

Houston, TX 77265-5381

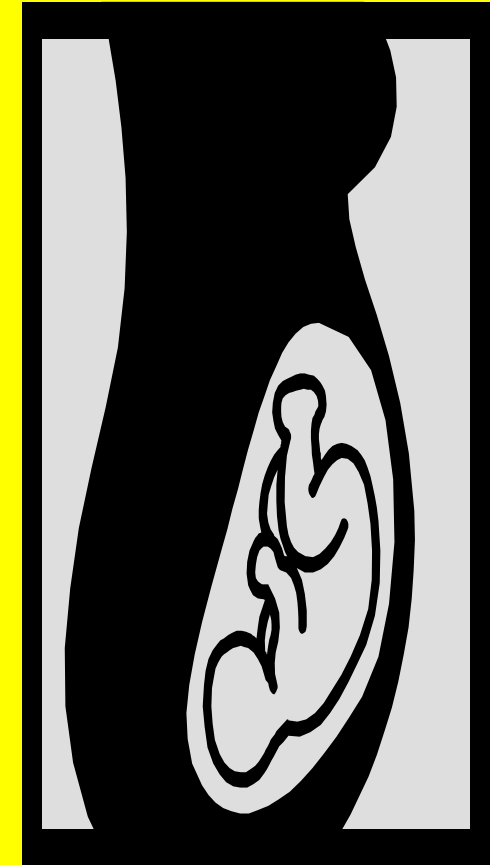
713-970-7742 (24 hours)



## Mental Retardation Mission Statement of MHMRA of Harris County

It shall be the mission of the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County (MHMRA) to implement and promote programs and services of high quality that assist individuals with mental retardation or developmental delays to develop the skills and access appropriate community supports and resources they need to learn, work and live with dignity as contributing members of the community.

# FASD Team



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