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David S. Mann

Councilmember


December 2, 2019

MOTION

WE MOVE that the Cincinnati Health Department study Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and educate its health care providers on the topic;

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Cincinnati Health Department begin trainings to enable providers to diagnose Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and counsel patients on how to manage its symptoms;

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Health Department and any other relevant City Departments explore requiring warning signs referencing the potentially devastating effects of maternal alcohol consumption on unborn fetuses during pregnancy;



STATEMENT

Alcohol has a worse impact on a fetus than other drugs; and studies have shown that 95% of women who use drugs also consume alcohol. The CDC recognizes that 1 in 20 people in the United States have a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Given its population of about 300,000, there are an estimated 15,000 people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in the city. Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders may have poor executive functioning, adaptive functioning, and working memory, as well as an inability to see cause and effect, dysmaturity, attention problems, and a lack of social awareness. These characteristics can lead to anxiety, acting out, truancy, suspension, and other behavioral issues if the disorder is undiagnosed or mistreated. Finally, as a result, individuals with these disorders unrecognized can engage in criminal activity, substance abuse, and trouble at home and at school.

Undiagnosed and untreated FASDs can also be costly for taxpayers, who will cover the cost of special education, law enforcement, health care, and foster care costs for children with FASDs who are placed in the foster care system. It is therefore both compassionate and good public policy to work through our Health Department to raise awareness of FASDs, as well as to diagnose and treat them wherever we can.