MotherToBaby Utah Hosts Webinar On Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco In Pregnancy

SALT LAKE CITY, UT – A webinar aimed at educating the public, as well as health care providers, about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs of abuse (ATOD) and their effects during pregnancy is now available for free viewing.

Julia Robertson, CPM, and Alfred Romeo, RN, PhD of MotherToBaby Utah, also known as the Pregnancy Risk Line, hosted the webinar. MotherToBaby Utah is supported by the Utah Department of Health.

Topics include a discussion on the increasing public health concerns with drug dependence, fetal embryology, birth defects associated with ATOD, educational activities to reduce ATOD use and resources for women and health care providers.

View the webinar here:

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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From healthy pregnancy tips, to everything breastfeeding, MotherToBaby has joined the visual platform of Pinterest in an effort to further educate the public about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding. If you're unfamiliar with Pinterest, the self-described "visual discovery tool" is considered one of the fastest growing social media websites in the world. It primarily uses pictures, infographics, sketches and cartoons to organize ideas about a variety of interests. Some surveys have shown that 80% of its 70 million users are women of childbearing age. This is an exciting platform for MotherToBaby and an interesting way for the organization to promote healthy pregnancies in a visually engaging

manner.

Please explore all that MotherToBaby's Pinterest site has to offer by clicking here.

Pinterest is the third main social media site for MotherToBaby. Explore its other social media websites by clicking on the following:

MotherToBaby's Facebook Page
MotherToBaby's Twitter Page

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January 7, 2014 – *Experts Call Mass Media Misrepresentation Of Recent Alcohol-Related Studies 'Harmful'.*

Brentwood, TN – "Children Of Mothers Who Drink Alcohol During Pregnancy 'Better Behaved,'" and "Pour It Up Pregs," coupled with images of smiling pregnant women sharing in a wine toast, are just some of the messages flooding news headlines in recent days following publicity of a study aimed at examining the behavioral outcomes of children whose mothers consumed alcohol during pregnancy. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) experts call the vast majority of the media's misinterpretation of the studies potentially "harmful."

"It's deeply concerning," said Kenneth Lyons Jones, MD, who is president of *MotherToBaby*, a service of the international non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego, and considered the world's leading expert on FAS, as well as other areas of birth defects research. The research causing such concern among experts, like Jones, over misinterpretation, is a series of studies out of the University of Copenhagen. "The take-home message of this study should in no way be to encourage drinking in pregnancy as a means to better mental health for children."

Janni Niclasen, a psychologist, surveyed approximately 37,000 Danish women who reported on drinking habits during pregnancy. The study results showed that women who drank as much as one glass of wine per week had children with

better emotional and behavioral outcomes by age seven compared to children of mothers who claimed to not drink at all. However, the author also points out that mothers who reported drinking tended to be more educated and have other potentially healthier characteristics overall. In addition, the author points out that the timing of the alcohol exposure during the surveyed pregnancies, which can play an important role in how the fetus is affected, was ignored.

“Even the author points out the significant limitations of her study, the problem is how the findings are being interpreted in the mass media,” said Christina Chambers, PhD, MotherToBaby epidemiologist and professor of pediatrics at the UC San Diego. “The study does not show that drinking caused mothers to have children with fewer behavioral concerns — rather that mothers who reported drinking were very different from mothers who did not in multiple ways. These differences in family and home environment, along with the way that alcohol exposure and child health were measured, could easily mask any associations with low level alcohol.”

Chambers also points out how the study used a maternally reported measure of mental health in the children. “The children were not formally tested, so the measures of mental health might not be so objective,” she said. “For example, mothers who admitted to drinking more might have been less likely to report problems in their children.”

According to Jones and Chambers, the study only further illustrates the ongoing conclusion that a “safe” amount of alcohol that any individual woman can drink during pregnancy has simply not been established.

Julie Pollock, vice president of the Southern CA chapter of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) couldn’t agree more. “When I read the way this study was being reported in the media, I wanted to scream,” she said. Pollock’s son, whose birth mother drank alcohol during pregnancy, was found mentally incompetent to stand trial after he was accused of killing his friend when he was just 10 years old. “Don’t buy into the hype. Those of us who live the reality of drinking while pregnant know the truth. There is no safe amount of alcohol to an unborn child. Please don’t look for an excuse to continue a behavior that is wrong.”

MotherToBaby is a one-stop-shop for evidence-based free counseling available to women and the general public. All North Americans can be connected with MotherToBaby experts and receive individualized risk assessments regarding alcohol, medications and other exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding through the toll-free, bilingual (English/Spanish) counseling service (866) 626-6847 or online at MotherToBaby.org.

Media Contact: Nicole Chavez, 858-246-1745, nchavez@mothertobaby.org. Interviews in Spanish can also be arranged.

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ATLANTA, GA- A new OTIS/MotherToBaby affiliate providing expert answers about medications and other exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, is giving expectant moms in Georgia a peak into the service it provides.

Patricia Olney, MS, board certified genetic counselor and teratogen information specialist at **MotherToBaby Georgia**, was featured in a news segment on Fox Atlanta this week.

“We feel like we empower the couple or the woman with information that’s reliable that they can actually use to benefit from a healthy pregnancy,” said Olney. View the entire news spot by playing the video below.

Atlanta News, Weather, Traffic, and Sports | FOX 5

MotherToBaby GA is a free statewide counseling service that connects experts in the field of birth defects research with expectant moms, health care providers, and the general public. All it takes is a simple phone call to a toll-free number, 866-626-6847. MotherToBaby GA is funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and is in partnership with Emory University.

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MotherToBaby Utah Hosts Webinar On Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco In Pregnancy

ATLANTA, GA– A new free service, providing expert answers about medications and other exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, is giving expectant moms in Georgia another reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving.

Emory University School of Medicine announces *MotherToBaby Georgia*, a free statewide counseling service that connects experts in the field of birth defects research with expectant moms, health care providers, and the general public. All it takes is a simple phone call to a toll-free number, 866-626-6847. MotherToBaby GA is funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

MotherToBaby GA is an affiliate of the international non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), a prestigious professional society that supports and contributes to worldwide initiatives for education and birth defects research. MotherToBaby affiliates and OTIS are suggested resources by many agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dedicated to providing evidence-based information.

“Reliable information about the risks of medications, vaccines, alcohol, drugs of abuse, chemicals, and other exposures during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, is often difficult to find, especially online. We wanted to be sure that pregnant women and health care providers knew that experts on the most cutting edge research were readily available to them,” explained Claire Coles, PhD, director of MotherToBaby GA, which is housed at the Center forMaternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Center in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Emory School of Medicine.

Dr. Coles further explains the need for this sort of counseling since approximately 50% of women report taking at least one medication during pregnancy. “The average woman doesn’t find out she’s pregnant until she’s five or six weeks along. That means a woman could have been consuming alcohol or taking medications during that time without knowing she’s pregnant. She then finds herself deeply concerned about what it might mean for her developing baby.”

Surveys indicate that while the majority of callers are pregnant women, most have been referred by physicians, nurses, midwives and pharmacists.

“What is passed from mother to baby is exactly what we educate the public about, which is why we strongly believe MotherToBaby GA will provide a beneficial service in our state,” said Patricia Olney, MS, board certified genetic counselor and pregnancy risk information specialist. Olney answers calls from around the state and provides counseling over the phone. “We offer an added layer of support by providing her with an individualized risk assessment so she may make informed health decisions along with her primary health care provider,” she added.

For more information about MotherToBaby GA please visit: www.MotherToBaby.org or www.emory.edu/msacd.

For counseling, call toll-FREE 866-626-6847 from throughout North America. In Georgia, you can also call 855-789-6222, or email: mothertobaby@emory.edu.

Media Contact: Patricia Olney, MS, CGC at 855-789-6222 or mothertobaby@emory.edu.

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