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From: paulineandbill [paulineandbill@xtra.co.nz]
Sent: Sunday, 20 January 2008 8:13 PM
To: standards management
Subject: warning labels on Alcoholic drinks for pregnant women

To whom it may concern:

“Application A576 – Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages with a Pregnancy Health Advisory Label”.

I wish to endorse the submission made by ALAC to place warning labels regarding the dangers of drinking when pregnant on alcohol containers.

It is unbelievable that a substance, known to cause brain damage in the developing foetus, and so widely and readily available, has no warnings whatsoever for pregnant women. The myth is that alcohol does not create any problem for a baby in utero, and thus many women believe it to be safe – and indeed, some believe healthy. All adults need to be advised of the risks they are placing on their unborn child.

If anyone would care to spend just a few days with my Fetal Alcohol Affected adopted daughter, then they would soon see at first hand the huge problems caused by alcoholic drinks on an unborn child.

We have struggled for 30 years with our FAS affected daughter, and it has only been because of a deep sense of commitment to her care and welfare that we have kept her at home and cared for her. But it has been difficult and at times heartbreaking for us. FAS is the most frustrating syndrome – both for the victim and their parents and family. The problem will never go away. It is a life sentence for the affected person and their family. I would not wish this on any family. And it is entirely preventable.

From personal experience, I wish I could advise all women of the dangers of drinking alcohol when pregnant. I wish I could tell them not to put their unborn child at risk. I wish I could tell them not to condemn their child to this syndrome, nor condemn themselves to a life-time of care for such a baby, such a child, such an adult. I wish I could tell all pregnant women that they will not only give a life sentence of brain damage to their child for the rest of its life, but also a life sentence of care for this damaged child to herself for the rest of her life. The only way I (and other families like mine) can warn others of this dreadful life sentence caused by alcohol, is by supporting the use of warning labels on all alcoholic beverages. I wish I could tell everyone of the cost of drinking alcohol whilst pregnant. The cost is a damaged child, damaged parents, and a damaged family. Is it too much to ask that we warn our New Zealand citizens of the high price they pay for drinking whilst pregnant. The cost of a drink can cost a life of normality for both child and parents - all for the cost of a warning label.

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