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The Meth Baby Myth

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Signatories from leading hospitals and Research Institutes in US and abroad agree that term lacks scientific basis as does the claim that treatment does not work. On July 25, 2005 more than 90 leading medical doctors, scientists, psychological researchers and treatment specialists released a public letter calling on the media to stop the use of such terms as “ice babies” and “meth babies.” This prestigious group agrees that these terms lack scientific validity and should not be used.

Motivated by news coverage using alarmist and unjustified labels and new legislative proposals suggesting punishment rather than treatment, these leading doctors, researchers, and specialists collaborated to write a consensus statement requesting that media coverage of the subject and legislative proposals addressing it be “based on science not presumption or prejudice.” Members of the consensus group agree “The use of stigmatizing terms, such as ‘ice babies’ and ‘meth babies’ lack scientific validity” and that the use of “such labels harms the children to which they are applied” by “lowering expectations for their academic and life achievements, discouraging investigation into other causes for physical and social problems the child might encounter, and leading to policies that ignore factors, including poverty, that may play a much more significant role in their lives. Members also agree that “the suggestion that treatment will not work for people dependent upon methamphetamines, particularly mothers, also lacks any scientific basis.” The letter calls on the media to stop the use of pejorative terms and also urges the media to stop its practice of relying on people who lack scientific experience or expertise for their information about the effects of prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and about the efficacy of treatment. In order to receive a copy of the complete list of signatories, please visit

<http://www.jointogether.org/y/0,2521,577769,00.html>