



IVPA connection



Spring 2006

This publication is the tenth in a series of newsletters about programs administered by the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority

FEATURED PROGRAM

Overview: Illinois Health Cares

Illinois Health Cares (IHC) works to improve the health care community's capacity to engage in violence prevention and response activities related to domestic violence, elder abuse and sexual violence. The program is collaboratively administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority.

Since 2003, Illinois Health Cares has trained over 5,000 professionals on the health care response to domestic, elder or sexual violence and distributed a wide range of educational materials to health care providers, including almost 20,000 Radar Cards—laminated, pocket-sized cards which remind health care providers to assess for intimate/domestic violence and elder abuse.

Illinois Health Cares is guided by a strong commitment to collaboration among a wide range of partners. On the local level, IHC draws on the strengths of partners which include community-based domestic violence, elder abuse or sexual assault victim services programs; public health departments; Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Councils; and hospitals and clinics or other group practices.

Currently, seven sites convene a team of primary partners and a larger community coalition. Local IHC sites include the Jackson County Health Department, Murphysboro; South Suburban Family Shelter, Homewood; A Woman's Fund,

Urbana; St. Clair County Health Department, Belleville; Between Friends, Chicago/Evanston; PHASE/WAVE, Rockford, and Sojourn Shelter and Services, Springfield. The eighth site, the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital, Bureau of Cook County Health Services, is based in an urban hospital setting. The Stroger Hospital will focus on the health care response to elder abuse as it moves into the first year of an Illinois Health Cares implementation grant in July, 2006.

Illinois Health Cares also works on the state and national levels to help communities strengthen their local health care system's violence prevention and intervention services. Illinois was one of 15 states to participate in the National Standards campaign, a Family Violence Prevention Fund initiative focused on public policy, public health and prevention campaigns to strengthen the health care response to domestic violence.

In the last year, IHC was also part of an Illinois team selected to participate in the first five-day session of the PREVENT Institute, a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Injury Center at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The team developed a pilot project model focused on health care providers delivering messages about teen dating and sexual violence.

Health Care Providers Play Critical Role in Violence Prevention

Health care providers play a critical role in preventing violence, according to a growing body of research and a wide range of professionals. One reason for that is clear: More and more evidence shows a link between intimate partner violence and leading health indicators that raise concerns about patient health.

Research Links Violence, Health Problems

In 2003, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released Healthy People 2010, a prevention agenda that identified "ten Leading Health Indicators that measure the health and wellbeing of the nation for the decade."

Since that prevention agenda was announced, research has shown that there is a connection between intimate partner violence (IPV) and eight out of ten Leading Health Indicators: Overweight and obesity; tobacco; substance abuse; responsible sexual behavior; mental health; injury and violence; immunization, and access to health care.

For example, research revealed a link between violence and health indicators in a range of key areas, including:

- **Substance abuse:** Spousal abuse has been identified as a predictor of developing a substance abuse problem;
- **Mental health:** Female survivors of intimate partner violence are at increased risk for suffering serious mental health problems that can continue years after the abuse has ended;

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Illinois Health Cares

Interview with Debbie Lee, Managing Director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund

The San Francisco-based Family Violence Prevention Fund is a national organization that works to end domestic violence and help women and children whose lives are devastated by abuse.

IVPA: Research has linked intimate partner violence with 8 of 10 Leading Health Indicators cited in the federal Healthy People 2010 initiative (see story, Page 1). What is the significance of this research?

Lee: What this research tells us is that domestic violence and other forms of violence can exacerbate other health problems—and, in some cases, bring them on.

This research has particular significance for health care providers. Yes—we are asking health care providers to screen patients for domestic violence and for lifetime exposure to violence. Besides the screenings, though, what is really helpful is for health care providers to have conversations with patients in a more integrated and subtle way. In brief conversations, providers need to bring up how patients are trying to change their behaviors and assess for violence.

IVPA: Are you seeing a change in how violence is talked about by doctors?

Lee: There is a change within medical schools now—they are doing more to integrate how health care providers relate to patients into what is being taught. More schools are integrating that with biochemical training students receive. Nursing schools have always been very good at teaching students how to talk with patients about these issues.

Still, I think that some in the health care field fear that in bringing up these issues it will let out a well of further pain. But what we have found is that these conversations can be something for patients to think about. Making these connections can have a real healing effect.



Debbie Lee, Managing Director, Family Violence Prevention Fund

IVPA: The new Violence Against Women Act is another example of how our society is acknowledging the important role health care providers play in violence prevention. How does this law break new ground?

Lee: This is the first time we have been able to include in federal legislation a recognition of the role of the health care system in addressing violence.

There's not a lot of money involved, but the Violence Against Women Act will also provide some training for health care providers and students in health professional schools to identify victims of domestic and sexual violence. This law recognizes that we can change the culture within schools.

“What really distinguishes the efforts in Illinois has been the leadership. There has been a real culture of collaboration that occurs in Illinois.”

— Debbie Lee, Managing Director, Family Violence Prevention Fund

IVPA: What can you tell us about the work being done in Illinois on domestic violence issues?

Lee: Illinois was one of 15 states we partnered with over 4 years for the National Standards campaign to improve the way they integrate domestic violence work in health care programs and medical school training—and develop policies and funding.

In fact, Illinois started earlier than our initiative. Leaders in Illinois saw that clinicians need to have the opportunity to talk about domestic violence. What really distinguishes the efforts in Illinois has been the leadership. There has been a real culture of collaboration that occurs in Illinois.

IVPA: Are there types of violence you would like to see emphasized more by health care providers?

Lee: Yes. I think we still very much overlook the needs and assessment among the elderly population.

There is a possible reason for that. When you talk to doctors anecdotally, they say it can be more difficult to ask elders, or peers from the same economic or social class, about these issues. There's this belief that they don't want to offend the patients. It's hard for some people to believe that violence happens to this population—but it does.

Health Care Providers Play Critical Role (continued from page 1)

- **Immunization:** Due to factors including lack of insurance and controlling partner behaviors, children of mothers experiencing abuse are less likely to complete immunizations compared to children whose mothers do not report abuse.
- **Access to health care:** Female victims of IPV are generally less likely to access preventative and injury-related health care compared to non-abused women.

of nursing at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, says that health care providers “need to be prepared to assist both victim survivors and victim witnesses (usually children) of IPV. More opportunities to prevent or counteract this crime can now be addressed as a result of the established link to Healthy People 2010 research efforts,” according to Allen-Attala, who is also a member of the St. Clair County

by a doctor when she was a victim of domestic violence—and having that doctor respond in a caring and professional way.



Photos courtesy of Family Violence Prevention Fund

“Physicians need to let victims know that the violence perpetrated against them is wrong and does not need to be tolerated. And, of course, they need to say ‘I can and will help you.’”

— *Dr. J. Kevin Dorsey, Dean of the School of Medicine at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and former member of the Jackson County Health Department Illinois Health Cares Collaborative*

Role of Health Care Provider

What can doctors do to address this issue? “Physicians need to let victims know that the violence perpetrated against them is wrong and does not need to be tolerated. And, of course, they need to say ‘I can and will help you,’” says Dr. J. Kevin Dorsey, Dean of the School of Medicine at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and former member of the Jackson County Health Department Illinois Health Cares Collaborative. While teaching at SIU’s medical school, Dr. Dorsey once worked with students to develop a “diagnostic test” that would help doctors determine if a patient was a victim of domestic violence.

“From my perspective as a clinician, if I don’t know what your diagnosis is, how can I give the right treatment?,” says Dr. Dorsey, who has also helped raise awareness about the role of health care providers in preventing violence by speaking to medical professional groups on the subject. “If I do know what the problem is, then I can make an appropriate referral if needed—to a shelter or perhaps other support services in the community.” Jan Allen-Attala, RN, PhD, a violence prevention researcher who has published widely in the field and taught at the school

Health Department Illinois Health Cares Collaborative.

In the Community

In a number of Illinois communities, sites that implement the Illinois Health Cares program are working with health care providers to strengthen their violence prevention and intervention services.

Anna Johnson, Illinois Health Cares Coordinator at PHASE/WAVE in Rockford, says that “a lot of times health care providers can be the first professional that a person has contact with after being victimized, so it’s crucial that they know the right things to say.”

PHASE/WAVE, like other sites in the Illinois Health Cares program, works to provide direct and accessible violence prevention information to health care providers through a range of trainings, billboards and other published materials, and various efforts that emphasize diversity and inclusion.

For Vickii Coffey, the important role of health care providers has been critical to her work—and her personal life. Coffey, who is executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network, relates a personal story about being treated

“That was a critical moment for me, to find that he was concerned about sending me home and about the type of injuries I sustained.”

Thirty years later, her memory of this encounter with a doctor remains vivid.

“I saw this doctor one time—he had one opportunity to intervene, and he did it in a sensitive, understanding, compassionate way. The impact he had on my life was transformational.”

For more information about research on the link between intimate partner violence and leading health indicators, go to the website of the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the following page: endabuse.org/hcadvd/2003/tier4.pdf

Illinois Health Cares is a program of the

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Illinois Health Cares: Resources

Illinois Health Cares offers a variety of resources to help communities strengthen the response of local health care systems to violence.

To receive information or be notified about upcoming events, please put a check mark next to the items you would like to receive and complete the IHC Resource Request Form below.

Conferences/Trainings

Please submit your name to be included on a notification list for upcoming IHC training of trainers.

In the last 4 years, 325 persons have attended IHC “train the trainer” sessions that prepare health care providers to return to their communities and offer training to their peers.

Educational Bulletins

Through the generosity of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, IHC has produced an eight-page educational bulletin on the health care response to elder abuse. Specific information on Illinois reporting laws and elder abuse contact numbers are provided. An electronic version of this document is available.

Core Competencies

The IHC core competencies document describes seven areas to be addressed by trainings directed towards health care providers—and suggest indicators of competencies for each area. Competencies focus on the response to domestic/intimate partner violence, elder abuse and sexual violence.

Plus: For the following materials, please indicate how many of each item you would like to receive:

Partner Violence: A Guide for Physicians and Other Illinois Health Care Providers

This guidebook provides the rationale and response for health care response to domestic/intimate partner violence. The guidebook also provides phone numbers for Illinois domestic, elder, and sexual violence programs, information about reporting requirements, and telephone report line numbers.

_____ *quantity*

Exam Room Posters

English *Spanish*

The 16" by 20" poster is appropriate for use in hospitals or clinics and urges patients who may have been in an abusive relationship to discuss it with their health care provider.

_____ *quantity*

Radar Cards

This laminated, pocket-sized 11" by 4" card reminds health care providers to assess patients for domestic/intimate partner violence and elder abuse and prompts them through various assessment and response activities.

_____ *quantity*

Resource request form:

FROM:

Please fax, email or phone your requests to:

Illinois Health Cares

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Email: **ldautenh@idph.state.il.us**
Phone: **217.558.6570**

Notes: