

A Report of the Interagency Task Force on

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention

State of Minnesota
January 2003

Sexual assault and domestic violence in Minnesota is estimated to cost billions per year...

In Minnesota, six rapes occur each day...

In 2001, 33 women and 12 children were murdered by domestic violence incidents throughout Minnesota in 2001...

Over 14,000 domestic violence orders for protection are filed each year in Minnesota...

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



Center for Crime Victim Services

January 2003

Dear Governor Pawlenty and Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

Domestic violence and sexual assault exists — and adversely impacts — every community in Minnesota. It is estimated that these crimes cost our state billions of dollars a year. The Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention (IATF) was created by the Legislature in 2000 to explore domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, and submit an annual report with recommendations addressing these issues.

The IATF submits this 2003 report for your consideration. The report provides a summary of the task force, the facts about domestic violence and sexual assault in Minnesota and the associated costs of these crimes, an overview of funding and victim assistance programs, an update on the progress of prior recommendations, and the recommendation for 2003.

I hope you will review this report and keep the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault a priority among the many challenges facing our citizens, communities and Legislature in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paula Weber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Weber
Chair, Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention



A Report from the

Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention

Prepared by:

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services

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Department of Public Safety
Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services



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Executive Summary

The Minnesota Legislature created the Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention (IATF) during the 2000 legislative session and charged the task force with developing a statewide strategic plan to address and formulate:

1. Recommendations on how to reduce incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault.
2. Recommendations on how to coordinate existing resources at the federal, state and local levels to reduce incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault; including specific proposals on how these entities may better cooperate.
3. Recommendations for changes in policies and laws to reduce incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault.
4. Recommendations on the need for increased services and resources to reduce incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault.
5. Other items deemed appropriate by the task force.

The director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention staffs the task force through the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services (MCCVS). This report is a summary of the work of the task force during the past year. In 2002, the task force reviewed current data on the incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault. Violence against women is, and continues to be, an enormous problem that distresses victims, families, the criminal justice system, and society as a whole. Consequently, this violence in our communities affects the very core of our state's well-being.

In an effort to address these issues, the task force examined innovative programs and initiatives that are

being pioneered throughout the state. They found many collaborative and prevention oriented programs that have been created and are beginning to show encouraging outcomes. A list of the presentations and descriptions of a sampling of these programs is included later in this report.

The task force continues to support past recommendations and recognizes the need for changes in laws, policies and directives to improve the response to and reduce the incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault. The IATF continues to support its previous recommendations including:

- Comprehensive, multi-system interventions for children who are exposed to domestic violence and sexual assault and the resources to address their needs.
- A statewide clearinghouse for information and research on best practices for preventing and responding to sexual assault.
- A change in Minnesota domestic violence and firearms statutes to bring them into compliance with the federal firearms statute.
- The need for safe transitional housing for victims.
- The reduction of probation officer caseloads, specifically with domestic violence and sexual assault offenders.

Several of the recommendations from last year have resulted in new, innovative programming. An overview of programs and examples of best practices are included in this report.

Executive Summary

The IATF acknowledges the existence of a budget crisis in the state of Minnesota and realizes that this is not the time to recommend additional funding for program expansion. However, the task force also recognizes the need for support of existing victim service programs and organizations. The impact of violence must continue to be addressed through victim assistance agencies.

A map of counties and victim programs are included in

this report. Although some counties do not have domestic violence and sexual assault programs, the majority of people within our state have access to some type of victim assistance. These programs are an essential component in both intervention and prevention. Clearly, it is crucial to maintain funding for existing programs and prevent any additional budget cuts. Therefore, the task force put forth the following single recommendation for 2003:

As a result of the projected state budget deficit, domestic violence and sexual assault programs have undergone difficult cutbacks in recent years. The Legislature reduced the state general fund grant dollars for victim services by 20 percent for the 2004 and 2005 biennium. Reduction in services dictated by these cuts will have an extremely negative impact on the lives of victims, public safety, and the quality of life in our state.

Violence against women continues to be an epidemic in Minnesota. The cost of these crimes include expenditures for law enforcement, prosecution, courts, hospitals, social services and corrections and is estimated at billions of dollars each year.

Researchers have estimated the annual cost of domestic violence to the nation at \$67 billion. Overall, rape is one of the costliest

crimes for victims in the United States, with annual costs estimated at \$127 billion. These costs far exceed the cost of domestic violence and sexual assault intervention and prevention programs.

These programs play a vital role in providing essential victim services and reducing violence and the costs associated with violence. As the state faces additional budget concerns, further cuts in these services cannot be absorbed without eroding basic services to victims. The remaining state funds are urgently needed to support the statewide network of organizations that are struggling for stability to ensure that victims continue to receive adequate services.

Therefore, the Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention recommends there be no further budget reductions in the area of crime victim services.

Introduction

The Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention has looked at the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention in the past year. During this time, they focused on promising programs and best practices in the field. The task force recognizes the importance of this work in both prevention and intervention, and the critical impact of programs on victims, public safety and costs to society. The IATF acknowledges the significance of these programs and recommends that no further funding cuts occur in crime victim services.

Crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault result in tremendous costs to society. In Minnesota, it is estimated that billions of dollars are spent each year on social services, medical care, mental health services, police investigations, criminal prosecutions and corrections as a result of these crimes. Additionally, the psychological and emotional cost of violence must be considered and cannot accurately be assessed in monetary terms. Although studies have not directly measured the benefits that result from victim services, we do

know that prompt, comprehensive assistance to victims hastens the healing process. Funding for victim programming is essential and must be safeguarded.

In the 2002 report, the task force made nine recommendations to aid in reducing the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault. During the past year, the IATF has tracked the progress of these recommendations and supported related efforts in moving these ideas forward. The outcomes of this work are included in the report.

The task force also looked at innovative programming developed throughout Minnesota. Many of the programs in both domestic violence and sexual assault offer a coordinated, community response to victims. Others include collaboration between programs and agencies at different levels including community, municipal, county and state levels. Examples of promising practices are in this report. Many of these new approaches have resulted in effective victim-centered methods to assist victims and hold offenders accountable.

Costs of Violence

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Researchers have estimated the annual cost of domestic violence to the nation at \$67 billion in labor force, child well-being, housing, social services, health care and criminal justice.

L. Laurence and R. Spalter-Roth

The average cost of being a rape victim is estimated at \$110,000. This compares with victim costs of \$16,000 for robbery and \$36,000 for drunk driving.

Minnesota Department of Health

Non-lethal intimate violence results in financial losses to women victims that are conservatively estimated to be \$150 million per year.

Greenfield L., et al

Overall, rape is one of the costliest crimes for victims in the United States, with annual costs to victims estimated at \$127 billion (estimate does not include child sexual abuse).

Minnesota Department of Health

An Allina Health Systems study found the cost of providing care to victims of intimate partner violence was 92 percent greater than costs for a random sampling of female general enrollees.

D. Bohn

In data reflecting over 90 percent of all Minnesota hospitals (clinics not included), 1,378 victims of domestic violence and 1,002 victims of sex abuse were treated as patients.

Minnesota Department of Health

Battering and assault puts an enormous burden on the criminal justice system. A study found that 22 percent of 911 calls in the District of Columbia were from victims of battering. Yet, the full costs to the courts and law enforcement have not been calculated.

National Resource Council

Domestic Violence and the Workplace

78 percent of Human Resource directors identify domestic violence as a substantial employee problem.

American Institute on Domestic Violence

Employers lose between \$3 billion and \$5 billion every year in absenteeism, lower productivity, higher turnover, and health and safety costs associated with battered workers.

American Institute on Domestic Violence

Over 1,750,000 workdays are lost each year due to domestic violence.

American Institute on Domestic Violence

Homicide is the leading cause of death to women in the workplace.

American Institute on Domestic Violence

Even using the most conservative estimates of costs of violence against women, it is clear the cost of victim intervention and prevention is miniscule in comparison.

Minnesota Domestic Violence Facts

FACT

At least one in four American women report that they have been physically abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their life.

Family Violence Prevention Fund

FACT

In Hennepin County, almost 5,000 restraining orders were filed in 2001, including 3,138 Orders for Protection and 1,807 Harassment Orders.

Hennepin County Court Administration

FACT

In 2001, nearly 14,000 Orders for Protection were filed in Minnesota.

Supreme Court Administration

FACT

There were 2,362 domestic assault arrests in Minneapolis in 2001.

Minneapolis Police Department

FACT

Thirty-three women and 12 children were murdered in 2001 in domestic violence incidents.

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

FACT

Each year, an estimated 3.3 million children witness violence by family members against their mothers or female caretakers.

American Bar Association

FACT

There were 18,846 calls to 911 in Minneapolis in 2001 identified as “domestic” calls. Of those, 452 were “domestic fight with weapons” calls.

Minneapolis Police Department

FACT

Battered women in Minnesota spent 94,090 nights in safe shelter in fiscal year 2002.

Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services

Sexual Assault Facts

Minnesota

FACT

Of the 2,241 reported actual rapes that occurred in 2000, 2,111 were by force while 130 were recorded as attempted rapes.

FACT

Of the total rapes occurring in 2000, 1,342 or 60 percent were cleared by arrest. Of this total, 162 were cleared with the arrest of a juvenile.

FACT

There were 1,999 female victims and 242 male victims reported in 2000.

FACT

The total number of rapes in 2000 represented an average of six per day.

FACT

There were 812 calls to 911 in Minneapolis identified as criminal sexual conduct calls in 2001.

Minneapolis Police Department

FACT

The crime rate for rape in 2000 represented 47 per 100,000 population.

National

FACT

On average, only 10 percent to 20 percent of victims report sexual assault.

FACT

About one in three women have experienced rape or attempted rape by an acquaintance.

FACT

Approximately 75 percent of all rapes are planned in advance.

FACT

About 85 percent of all rapes involve physical violence or use of a weapon.

FACT

Though sexual violence affects women/girls of all ages, adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13 and 25 are at highest risk.

FACT

All rapes, 39 percent of attempted rapes, and 17 percent of sexual assaults against females resulted in injured victims, 1992-2000.

U.S. Department of Justice

Sources: Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault; National Sexual Violence Resource Center unless otherwise noted.

Services Provided

Current Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Funding and Programming

The following information illustrates the array of victim services in Minnesota. The first is a chart showing the funding sources and amounts in each of the two crime victimization areas. Grants for domestic violence and sexual assault programs are administered by the

Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services and are supported by federal and state funds. The number and description of the types of domestic violence and sexual assault programs are listed and a map depicts the geographic location of the services provided.

Funding Sources and Amounts (Funds listed are for state fiscal year 2003.)

Battered Women's Services

State General Fund – Shelter Per Diem	\$18,379,000
State General Funds – Grants	\$5,497,000
Federal Victims of Crime Act Funds	\$693,500
Federal Violence Prevention and Services Act Funds	\$1,555,848
Federal Violence Against Women Act Funds	\$988,000
Total	\$27,113,348

Sexual Assault Services

State General Funds	\$2,087,000
Federal Victims of Crime Act Funds	\$1,098,712
Federal Violence Against Women Act Funds	\$1,143,000
Federal Prevention and Personal Health Care Block Grant Funds	\$130,936
Total	\$4,459,648

Services Provided

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs Funded by Grants Through the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services

(Number of programs indicated parenthetically.)

Domestic Violence Community Advocacy Programs (CAP) (79)

Programs provide general advocacy services including 24-hour crisis intervention, information and referral, arrangements for emergency housing and transportation to safety, assistance in pursuing civil, criminal and family court remedies, accompaniment to appointments as appropriate, and coordination of services provided by other agencies.

Sexual Assault Programs (61)

Programs provide general advocacy services including 24-hour crisis intervention, short-term emotional support, assistance in emergency services, transportation, medical procedures, investigations, court activities, and in accessing human, social and family services.

Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Interventions (CJI) Programs (32)

CJI programs work with local criminal justice agencies to improve the response to domestic violence victims. This is done through providing training to criminal justice professionals, tracking all cases from the initial law enforcement response to a domestic abuse call through sentencing, and assisting criminal justice agencies with the development and implementation of effective policies and procedures. CJI programs also focus on advocating for victims of domestic violence whose assailants have been identified by the criminal justice system.

Domestic Violence Shelter Programs (24)

Domestic Violence Shelter programs provide temporary emergency housing for battered women and their

children. Shelters provide general advocacy services including 24-hour crisis intervention, information and referral, arrangements for emergency housing and transportation to safety, accompaniment to appointments as appropriate, assistance in pursuing civil, criminal and family court remedies, and coordination of services provided by other agencies.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) On-Going Services (21)

These programs operate as Domestic Violence Community Advocacy and/or Sexual Assault Programs, depending on their funding designation. Service provisions are equivalent to the advocacy programs previously described; the difference is their funding source (VAWA).

Domestic Violence Child Advocacy Programs (5)

These programs provide support groups and advocacy to children who are victims of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Undesignated Programs (8)

Primarily state monies to provide services that are not restricted to CAP standards. Agencies receiving these funds focus on areas of unmet needs.

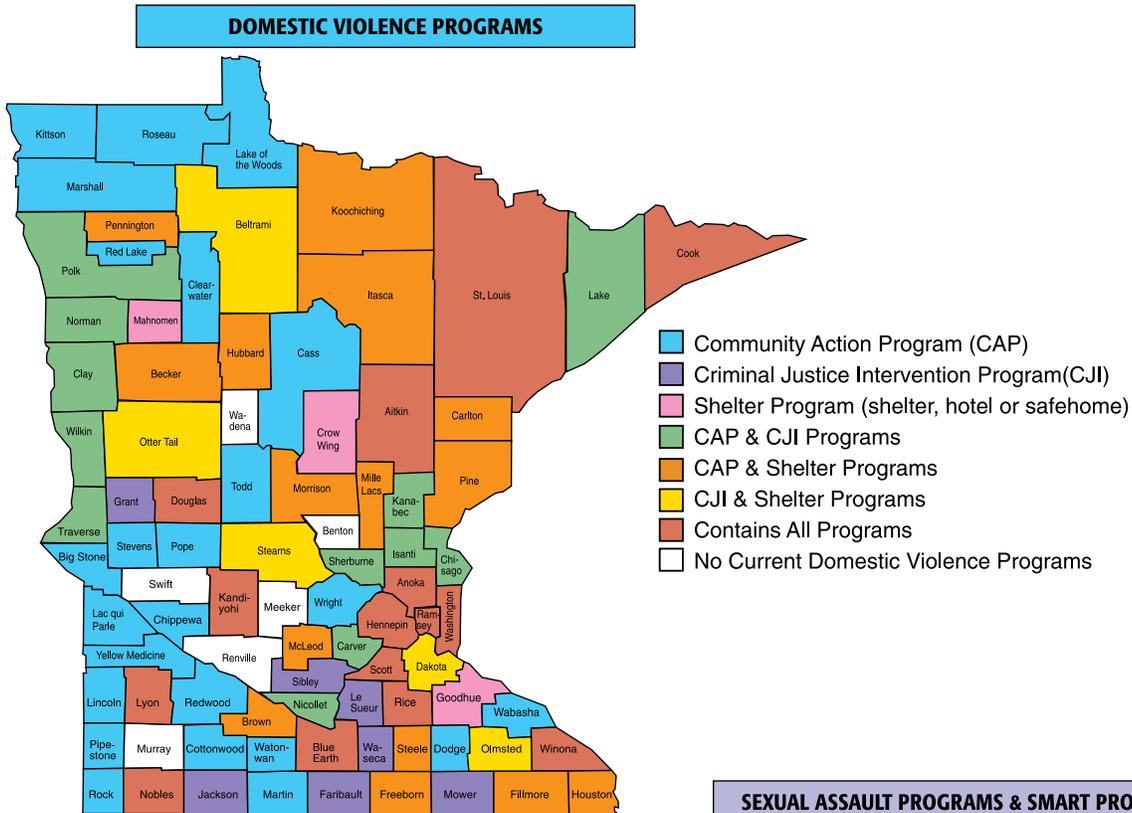
SA Teen Programs (4)

These programs provide prevention and support services to teens.

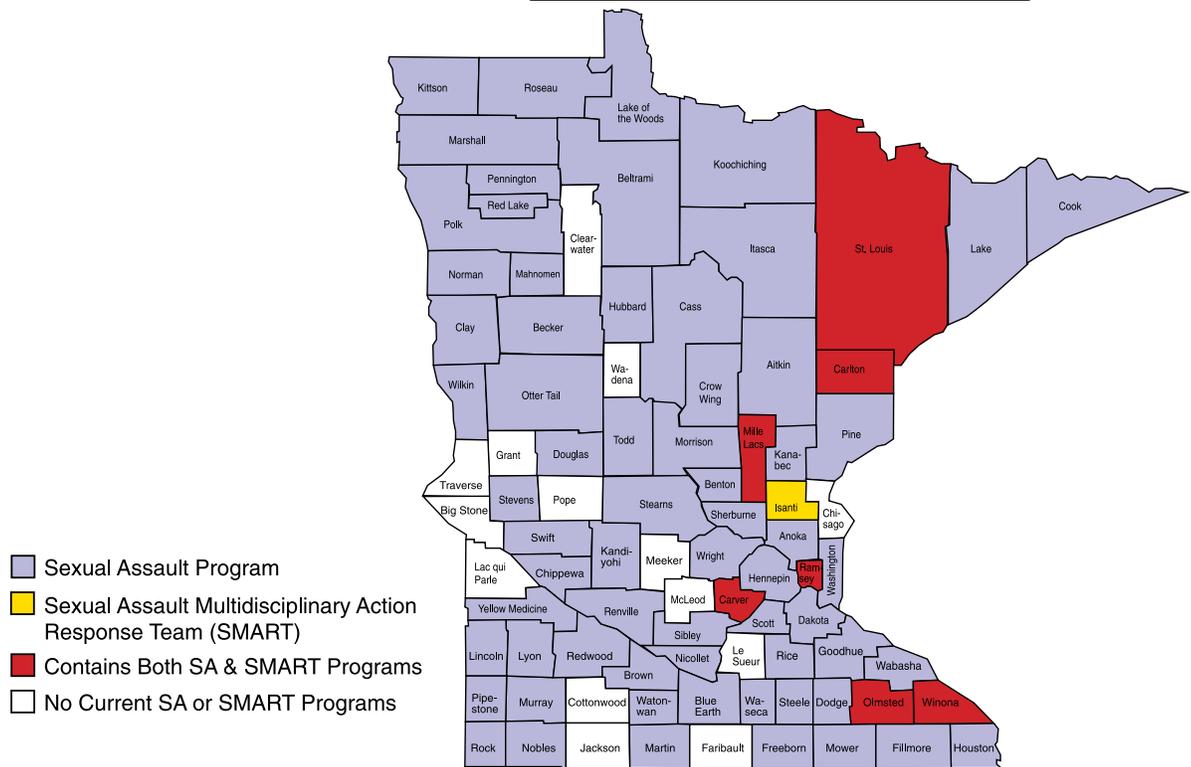
In addition to the direct services indicated above, all MCCVS-funded advocacy programs spend time providing community education, training other professionals on victim issues, and working with other criminal justice agencies to improve services to victims.

Services Provided

Existing Services



SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS & SMART PROJECTS



2003 Recommendation

As a result of the projected state budget deficit, domestic violence and sexual assault programs have undergone difficult cutbacks in recent years. The Legislature reduced the state general fund grant dollars for victim services by 20 percent for the 2004 and 2005 biennium. Reduction in services dictated by these cuts will have an extremely negative impact on the lives of victims, public safety, and the quality of life in our state.

Violence against women continues to be an epidemic in Minnesota. The annual cost of violence against women includes expenditures for law enforcement, prosecution, courts, hospitals, social services and corrections and is estimated at billions of dollars. These costs far exceed the cost of domestic violence and sexual assault intervention and prevention programs.

These programs play a vitally significant role in providing essential victim services and reducing violence against women and the costs associated with violence. As the state faces additional budget concerns, further cuts in these services cannot be absorbed without eroding basic services to victims. The remaining state funds are urgently needed to support the statewide network of organizations that are struggling for stability to ensure that victims continue to receive adequate services.

Therefore, the Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention recommends there be no further budget reductions in the area of crime victim services.

The current budget crisis has required major cuts across the board in state government. The MCCVS has made reductions in administration and services and will need to cut additional funds in FY 04-05. These cutbacks will leave victim assistance programs providing only the most basic services. Assistance to victims is essential as victims suffer emotionally, financially, psychologically, physically and socially. Victim programs provide crisis intervention, psychological support, information, and referral as well as support for victims involved in the criminal justice process.

In Minnesota, victim services were established in the 1970s. Since then, services have expanded, but many counties are still without assistance programs and many victims remain unserved.

Programs serve an important crime prevention mission by increasing public awareness and education. Additionally, programs prevent future crimes by pursuing offender accountability. Crisis counseling, safe shelter, advocacy and support groups all contribute to prevention and reduced victimization.

The cost of crime is high for an individual but it can be even higher for society. Although costs are difficult to measure, many studies have attempted to estimate the financial costs of crime. Two types of losses, tangible and intangible, are generally considered in this research.

Tangible costs of sexual violence include medical care, mental health services, loss of economic productivity, insurance administration, police investigations, criminal prosecutions and corrections.

Intangible costs of rape and sexual assault include the psychological pain and suffering of survivors and the generalized fear of victimization in society. Other societal effects of crime include reduced quality of life, reduced participation in the democratic process, decreased labor market participation, and intergenerational transmission of violence (Buvinic, et al, 1999).

Some studies put a price on specific types of crime. One study estimating the financial cost of sexual violence in Michigan approximated the total cost of rape and sexual assault at more than \$6.5 billion in one year (Post, et al, 2002). Researchers have estimated the annual cost of domestic violence to the nation at \$67 billion (Spelling & Roth, 1996).

Even using the most conservative estimates of costs of violence against women, it is clear that the cost of victim intervention and prevention is minuscule in comparison. For these reasons, the IATF is making only one, simple legislative recommendation this year — that there be no further budget reductions in the area of crime victim services.

Prior Recommendations

Last year, the task force developed nine recommendations to address domestic abuse and sexual assault and presented them to the legislature in the 2002 IATF report. The IATF continues to support these ideas and offers the following information on the progress relating to select recommendations during the past year.

To break the cycle of violence, the IATF supports comprehensive, multi-system interventions for children who are exposed to domestic violence and sexual assault by providing funding for up to three projects statewide to develop a model for using existing resources to address these children's needs.

Three different multi-system intervention programs are now in place in Minnesota. The Central Minnesota Task Force on Battered Women established the first program, Children Exposed to Violence Initiative (CEVI), in 2001. Two additional programs at Tubman Family Alliance and WomanSafe Center began in July 2002 and were made possible by a Violence Against Women Act grant through the MCCVS. Following is an overview of the three new intervention programs.

WomanSafe, Faribault

This children's initiative program incorporates community advocacy with systems representatives to form a collaborative team with a common goal - to intervene on behalf of children to enhance their safety and quality of life. The team includes WomanSafe Center and the Rice County Child Protection Team. Other members include the county attorney, school social workers, corrections personnel, mental health workers, municipal police, county sheriff, local childcare providers, and representatives from the courts and medical community. They meet and review new cases involving children and identify the best solution for each by using available resources. This cooperative effort results in a case consultation plan that is custom designed for each family.

WomanSafe Center employs multi-lingual advocates to reach out to Hispanic, Somali and Cambodian populations that are the largest underserved communities in Rice County. These advocates enjoy the trust and respect of community members and, as a result, the percentage of families that cooperate with the authorities and successfully implement their plans has increased dramatically. The beneficiaries are the children in question, and also the non-offending parents. The overall result is a dramatic increase in assistance to underserved communities and enhanced services and intervention for children who witness or experience violence in their lives. The benefit to families, communities, law enforcement and to society in general, is incalculable.

Children Exposed to Violence Initiative, St. Cloud

The CEVI was established to identify children exposed to family violence and assess the effects of this exposure. CEVI operates by holding a monthly Clinic Day at Anna Marie's Shelter. A child/adolescent psychiatrist and a child psychologist join the shelter team of child advocates, recreation specialists and a CEVI coordinator to assess each identified child in the shelter. Intakes, as well as informal screening for further professional assessment, are completed. After these assessments, the CEVI coordinator meets with each mother to give her the results of the assessments. When the family leaves the shelter, a CEVI coordinator provides follow-up according to the needs of the family.

Among these children, several behavioral patterns have been identified:

- Anxiety and depression requiring medication and/or therapy
- Speech/language problems
- Academic delays
- Sleep problems (nightmares, sleeplessness)
- Problems related to expression of anger

Prior Recommendations

Children Exposed to Violence Initiative (*continued*)

Complicating the above picture is the number of serious environmental factors that affect these children's chances of healing - homelessness, relocations to other cities/states, loss of father-figure or other familial figures due to relocation, lack of network of emotional support of parent, parent's own mental illness, lack of transportation and poverty.

The value of CEVI is apparent in the speed at which these children can be connected with medical, mental health, educational and social services. This can be attributed to the commitment of the collaborative CEVI team. The timely intervention and access to services provides an opportunity for children to receive the help they need and a chance to intercede in the cycle of violence.

Minnesota Child Response Initiative (MCRI), Minneapolis

The Minnesota Child Response Initiative is a project of the Tubman Family Alliance. MCRI is a broad attempt at system change, service integration, intervention and research, proximally aimed at identifying and intervening with children exposed to violence, and over the longer-term, aimed at reducing children's exposure to violence within families and communities. Stakeholders — police, domestic and sexual violence advocates, mental and medical health professionals, child welfare, school and courts representatives, and community members and agencies — work together to identify barriers to effective collaboration and remedy them.

The systems change effort is combined with a direct service component aimed at meeting an immediate need to intervene with children exposed to violence in the acute aftermath of the violent event. In addition, a research and evaluation component enables community agencies to make the best use of findings to improve prevention and

intervention efforts, and in turn, relay applied knowledge to researchers that may impact the design of their studies.

In the direct service component, clinicians and advocates respond to scenes of domestic violence incidents by a police-clinician pager. Children and families are offered immediate clinical treatment and advocacy, and following the initial consultation and delivery of home-based outreach services, children and families are offered referrals and additional services.

Services offered in coordination with partner agencies include advocacy, evaluation and therapy, and are provided as long as children and families need them.

MCRI evaluates the initiative at all levels and uses the evaluation to inform program development, particularly in considering demographic and replication issues. Consequently, the evaluation improves the scientific knowledge and understanding of the effects of exposure to violence and trauma on children to design effective intervention and prevention programs

Implications and Significance

Realizing the cycle of violence, communities around the nation have begun to pay attention to the needs of children exposed to family and community violence, and to recognize that without early intervention and prevention efforts, young victims and witnesses today will become the incarcerated felons and struggling adults of tomorrow. It is believed that through a combination of systems change and service integration efforts, identification and direct service provision to children in the aftermath of violence exposure, and research, that this initiative will significantly advance the understanding of the disruptions to children's lives and the most appropriate intervention and preventive programs for vulnerable families.

Prior Recommendations

IATF will examine the need for a statewide clearinghouse for information on sexual assault and research on best practices for preventing and responding to sexual assault.

The IATF supports the idea of a statewide clearinghouse for sexual assault issues and believes it would be beneficial to criminal justice professionals and other involved community members. Last spring, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding was made available through MCCVS and a proposal by the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault was submitted through the Sexual Violence Justice Institute (SVJI) to establish a sexual assault clearinghouse. The following section describes the plans for the clearinghouse.

Sexual Assault Clearinghouse

The SVJI is helping community-based teams develop victim-centered, coordinated community responses. But that is only a part of the solution. In recognition of the difficulty of investigating and prosecuting sexual assault cases, particularly in jurisdictions that may have few cases each year and even fewer resources to support case law and best practices research, the SVJI is developing a clearinghouse of legal resources which will:

- Develop and disseminate resources to assist prosecutors with legal tactics including current case law, legal memoranda on hot-button legal issues, skills bank to connect professionals across the state, law review and other published materials and jury-related tools and tactics.
- Develop and disseminate materials to assist legal advocates in their work with victims, including annual legal advocacy clinics and fact sheets on the most critical aspects of the criminal justice system and process.
- Provide case specific technical assistance to prosecutors, law enforcement personnel, and advocates.
- Assess the state of the application of sexual assault laws in Minnesota.

This work will be done in conjunction with other collaborators, including prosecutors in various jurisdictions, the Minnesota County Attorney's Association, and sexual assault advocacy programs.

Request that the MCCVS, in consultation with the IATF and other advisory committees, develop a model services plan for the state.

In response to this request, the MCCVS has looked at the need for adequate victim services throughout Minnesota and gathered information on the state of victim services and the gaps in service. This was accomplished through surveys, focus groups, town meetings, advisory councils and research. With this information, a strategic plan was developed with the major outcome revealing the need to strengthen the infrastructure of victim services statewide. A report on the strategic plan was presented to the IATF in order to increase their awareness of the state of victim services in Minnesota. A complete copy of this report is available on the MCCVS Web site at www.dps.state.mn.us/mccvs/.

Prior Recommendations

MCCVS will conduct an assessment of compliance with mandated crime victim's rights by members of the criminal justice system.

Although new research has not been conducted, a recent assessment of information including a study of criminal justice professionals and a survey of victim service providers has been completed. According to IATF discussions, victim rights in Minnesota are thought to be relatively sufficient, if not advanced. These discussions and the problems reflected in research indicate that the difficulties victims often experience are due to a lack of compliance with rights. Criminal justice professionals do not always fulfill their statutorily mandated obligations for a variety of reasons, mostly lack of time and knowledge. MCCVS is addressing these concerns by approaching the issues in two ways.

The Training, Communication, and Research (TCR) unit is responding to the need for increased knowledge of victim rights by offering training to criminal justice professionals throughout the state. Hopefully, with enhanced knowledge and awareness, the criminal justice response to victims will improve.

The TCR unit is addressing the lack of time (staff and resources) often experienced by law enforcement, prosecution and probation. To enhance the ability of criminal justice professionals to fulfill their statutorily mandated obligations in regard to victim notification, an automated system is being implemented by MCCVS. The system is called VINE, which stands for Victim Information and Notification Everyday.

VINE is a toll-free, fully automated telephone service that allows crime victims and others to contact an automated computer hotline to receive information about the status of an offender and to be notified about a change in the offender's custody status. Callers receive information about changes in an offender's custody status, including criminal charges, arrest, location, release and transfer. Information is conveyed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, anywhere in the state via telephone, e-mail or letter.

A live operator is available to assist victims and other callers with questions and notification registration. Registered users will include crime victims, law enforcement officials, advocates, court professionals and members of the public. The VINE service provides a life safety service for victims, family and friends, helps victims regain a sense of control, and empowers victims by providing information regarding their particular situation.

The IATF supports a change in Minnesota domestic violence and firearms statutes to bring them into compliance with the federal statute.

Minnesota law currently prohibits the possession of a pistol (but not long guns) for three years after a conviction for domestic assault or for violating an order for protection. Federal law prohibits an individual convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or who is subject to a valid order for protection from ever possessing a firearm, including both pistols and long guns. The lack of consistency within these two laws creates conflict and confusion. Although legislative changes have not been made in regard to this statute, various community activities have resulted in an enhanced awareness of the firearms issue and hope for future change.

About the Task Force

The Minnesota Legislature created the Interagency Task Force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention (IATF) under Minnesota Statute 611A.202 in 2000.

Responsibility for the task force's administration was placed with the Department of Public Safety, Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services and specifically with the director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention. The Legislature charged the task force with various responsibilities including evaluating the progress made in reducing domestic violence and sexual assaults. In addition, the IATF is to cooperate and coordinate their activities with the SAFE council, if feasible.

One of the responsibilities of the IATF is to promote the objectives of the director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention, which include:

- Advocate for the rights of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Increase public education and visibility about the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Encourage accountability regarding domestic violence and sexual assault at all levels of the system, and develops recommendations to improve accountability when the system fails.
- Support prosecution and civil litigation efforts regarding domestic violence and sexual assault at the federal and state levels.
- Study issues involving domestic violence and sexual assault as they pertain to both men and women, and present findings and recommendations resulting from these studies to all branches of government.
- Initiate policy changes regarding domestic violence and sexual assault at all levels of government.
- Coordinate existing resources, and promote coordinated and immediate community responses to better serve victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Build partnerships among law enforcement, prosecutors, defenders, advocates and courts to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Encourage and support the efforts of health care providers, mental health experts, employers, educators, clergy members and others, in raising awareness of and addressing how to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Coordinate and maximize the use of federal, state and local resources available to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault, and leverage more resources through grants and private funding.
- Serve as a liaison between the executive director of the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services and the commissioner of Health with regard to the Department of Health's Sexual Violence Prevention program funded by federal block grants, and oversee how this money is spent.

Membership

The 16-member task force includes representatives from, and appointed by, various federal, state and local agencies, criminal justice professionals and advocacy groups. IATF is comprised of the following members:

Maxine Barnett	Battered Women Shelter Representative, appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety, Central Minnesota Task Force on Battered Women, Executive Director
Mary Ellison	Department of Public Safety Representative, Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention and Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services, Executive Director
Carla Ferrucci	Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault Representative, Executive Director
Susan Gaertner	Minnesota County Attorney's Association Representative, Ramsey County Attorney
Gayle Hallin	Minnesota Department of Health Representative, Assistant Commissioner
Rick Hillengass	Department of Corrections Representative, Shakopee Minnesota Correctional Facility, Warden
Sue Johnson	Minnesota Department of Economic Security Representative, Displaced Homemakers Program
Marilyn Leonard	Minnesota Department of Human Services Representative, Families with Children, Manager
Peg Magill	U.S. Attorney's Office Representative, Assistant U.S. Attorney
Kelly Moller	Minnesota Attorney General's Office Representative, Assistant Attorney General
Hon. Stephen Muehlberg	Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court Representative, District Judge
David Nicholson	Department of Children Families & Learning Representative, Prevention Division, Manager
Jeff Oxtan	Law Enforcement Representative, appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety, Investigator, St. Cloud Police Department
Delrita Rudnitski	Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women Representative, Interim Executive Director
Paula Weber	Department of Public Safety, Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention, Director
Eileen Wells	League of Minnesota Cities Representative, City Attorney, City of Mankato

Background

The IATF meets monthly to address and discuss issues of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention. In the past year, the IATF explored various initiatives and innovative programming that address domestic violence and sexual assault prevention. To discover effective and pioneering efforts in this field, various presentations and reports have been reviewed by the IATF.

Presenters included:

- Hennepin County Fatality Review
Jacquelyn Hauser, Team Coordinator
Joan Peterson, Chief of the Criminal Div., Mpls. City Attorney's Office
Denise Eng, Sojourner Shelter
- Responding to Violence and Abuse:
Educating Minnesota Professionals for the Future
Cari Michaels, Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse, University of MN
- Criminal Sexual Conduct Statutes
Judge Stephen L. Muehlberg
- Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit
Ellen Pence, Praxis International
Denise Gamache, Battered Women's Justice Project
- Gender and Domestic Violence
Julie Tilley, Praxis International
Rep. Michael Paymar
- Strategic Plan for the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services
Mary Ellison, MCCVS

Resources reviewed:

- Responding to Violence and Abuse:
Educating Minnesota Professionals for the Future,
Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse
- Hennepin County Fatality Review Team,
Legislative Report
- 2001 Femicide Report, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
- Minnesota Statutes
- Safety and Accountability Audit, Battered Women's Justice Project
- Strategic Plan, 2002-2005, Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services

Minnesota has long been a leader in innovative programming and continues to strive towards addressing victim needs and improving the response of the criminal justice system to victims of violence against women. Additional funding is greatly needed to address existing gaps and the need for improvements in services but, regrettably, the budget crisis precludes any further program development at this time. The IATF is fully aware of current budget constraints and potential consequences. Accordingly, the IATF report for this year includes only one new recommendation. The recommendation simply asks that no further budget cuts be imposed on victim services as current funding is critical to preserve existing services.

Safety and Accountability Audit

The Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit is a systematic observation and analysis of intra- and inter-agency routines and paper trails used in processing cases of domestic abuse. The process, created by Dr. Ellen Pence, director of Praxis International in Duluth, can be limited to the examination of a single institutional step in case processing, such as conducting a pre-sentence investigation or booking an offender, or can investigate a series of steps, such as each step from the 911 call up to the pre-trial hearing. Similarly, an audit can be designed specifically to uncover a system's biases for or against specific groups of people, such as Native Americans, immigrants or others.

It is not a performance review of individual staff members, and it is not meant to uncover personal inadequacies and prejudices, or assess an individual's effectiveness. What an audit examines is how the actions of offenders and information gathered by staff are recorded, distributed, analyzed and used by other people within the

same or complementary systems. Individual staff members may be more or less effective in their own practices, but that is not the point of auditing their work. The purpose of the audit is to see how, where, and if their practices (both those in their job descriptions and those that evolve in their work culture) ensure the safety of victims and accountability of offenders.

Minneapolis, in collaboration with the Battered Women's Justice Project, was among the first communities to employ the safety audit methodology to assess their local criminal justice response to domestic violence and to implement audit recommendations in areas of police report writing, pre-trial risk assessment of domestic violence offenders and misdemeanor prosecution. For information about safety audits, contact a Praxis representative at 218-525-0487, or visit www.praxisinternational.org. Minneapolis safety audit reports can be viewed at www.bwjp.org

Family and Sexual Violence Unit

The St. Paul Police Department fully recognizes the significance of domestic related tragedies and the devastating toll they take on neighborhoods and the community. In 2001, the St. Paul Police Department created a model Family and Sexual Violence Unit to more effectively respond to domestic abuse by better ensuring victim's safety and holding perpetrators accountable for their violence. The unit was formulated in a manner that could easily be replicated by other police departments. The formulation is based on the knowledge that:

- Domestic violence is cyclical in nature and wreaks havoc on every facet of society.
- Even though prevention is the ultimate goal, intervention is a very strong method for future prevention due to the generational cycle.
- Expeditious identification and prosecution of offenders is critical in ensuring victims safety and/or that the perpetrators violence will not be redirected to another victim.
- Developing strong collaborations within the criminal justice system and throughout the community is

imperative in assisting victims and holding perpetrators accountable.

The new unit has resulted in one unit being responsible for, and overseeing, the entire process. The centralizing of responsibility has allowed better tracking of cases and enabled the victims to receive more effective services. The unit facilitates other divisions becoming victim-centered, focusing on victim safety and barriers, and working toward empowering the victim in decisions related to her case. The unit trains all of the divisions under its umbrella on the needs of victims from communities of color, the process of instituting a strong protocol for family violence investigations, and how to establish and sustain multi-discipline partnerships in achieving its work.

The newly created Family and Sexual Violence Unit has efficiently facilitated the process by which domestic violence cases are investigated and brought to successful resolution. Rapid intervention with offenders, greater assistance and protection to victims, and working in partnership with the community and other arms of the system has resulted in an overall increase in charges and convictions in domestic violence cases.

Resources

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Department of Public Safety
Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services

