

3 Domestic Violence

There is one health issue we rarely hear about- domestic violence. While few would argue that domestic violence is a crime, its impact on the health care system and society cannot be ignored. Over \$850 million dollars are spent each year on the medical costs for domestic violence victims and families in our nation.

Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in prostitution, and commit sexual assault crimes. According to the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, half of the men who frequently assault their wives also frequently assault their children. Research also suggests domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country.

In 2000, a U.S. Department of Justice survey found that over 4.8 million women were physically assaulted or raped by their intimate partners. Approximately 2 million of these women were injured in an assault and over 550,000 required medical care. Despite these alarming numbers, less than 10% of medical

providers screen their patients for domestic violence. Medical providers are in a unique position to offer support, information, and referrals to victims of domestic violence. Education of abusive relationships and screening of patients could reduce the incidence of abuse.

SCHSA is working with members of the community and providers to aid in the effort to prevent domestic and other family violence. Together with community representatives, law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, schools, non-profit organizations and government, we are developing a long-term plan for violence prevention in our county. In the next few months, we will be conducting surveys in the community to find out what we're doing right and what you think needs to change.

As a community, we can work to educate our children about the effects of violence and clearly state that violence is never acceptable. Eliminating abuse will require commitment from the whole community. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to contribute to the solution.



One Woman's Story:

For women like me with love and respect:

Who was my abuser? It was someone who once loved, protected, and supported me when I knew no one; he was my husband. I thought his actions were "normal" and I justified them because afterwards, he would express love for my son and me. I continued to cover up for him without realizing it. Little by little, he began distancing us from his family and later on, from mine. He controlled and dictated our lives.

I soon began voicing my opinions; I educated myself, learned English, and quit one of my two jobs. He called me ugly, unfaithful, prostitute, lazy, disobedient, ignorant, sinner, and much more. It was at this point when I felt my body and mind were deteriorating and my will failed me to continue covering up his psychological and physical abuse. His psychological abuse, to me was the worst of the two until he physically attacked me in the most humiliating way. It was this that led me to seek help. Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus and 911 helped my son and I escape. I found myself surrounded by my family, friends and strangers all of whom were there to help and support me.

There always seems to be someone who is able to see what we the victims of abuse cannot see because our abusers have us under so much control. Now more than ever I feel the need to help and share with other victims the truth about domestic violence. I want to support them in escaping the situation before it is too late.



Maternal and Child Health Care

Though we prepare for the probable effects of terrorism and other emergencies, we cannot forget the fight for the health and well being of infants born in Stanislaus County. To neglect the health of these infants is to abandon the future of this county. Infant death rates are often considered an indicator of the social well being of a community.

Too many infants never make it beyond the first year of life. The infant mortality rate is higher in our county than the nation and the state. The death rate among African American infants is over twice as high as other racial/ethnic groups in our county and the state. Some factors associated with infant mortality are: poverty, inadequate prenatal care, teen pregnancies, cutbacks of federal programs, and the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy.

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3 Preparing for Terrorism

Do not be afraid to move or leave if you feel uncomfortable or if something does not seem right.