



News Release
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New \$3 Million Federally-Funded Public Health Initiative Aims to Identify and Help Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Prevent Abuse and Unplanned Pregnancy

Ten Sites Chosen for New Project Funded by Office on Women's Health

San Francisco – The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) has chosen ten sites in nine states for a groundbreaking two-year violence prevention initiative designed to improve the health and safety of women and children. *Project Connect: A Coordinated Public Health Initiative to Prevent Violence against Women* is funded by the Office on Women's Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It will find new ways to identify, respond to and prevent domestic and sexual violence, and promote an improved public health response to abuse. *Project Connect* funding stems from the health provisions in the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005.

More than half the Project's funds are directed to ten geographically and ethnically diverse sites that will create comprehensive models of public health prevention and intervention that can lead to improved health and safety. Each site will work with family planning, adolescent health, home visitation, and other maternal child health and perinatal programs to develop policy and public health responses to domestic and sexual violence. *Project Connect* grantees will also provide basic health and reproductive health services in domestic and sexual violence programs.

The FVPF, in collaboration with the OWH will provide technical assistance and monitor the grantees selected for Project Connect. Ten grantees were selected through a competitive process and will be awarded \$200,000 for implementation. The selected grantees are:

- Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Southern Indian Health Council in California
- Kima:w Medical Center/Hoopa Valley Tribe in California
- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Ohio Domestic Violence Network
- Iowa Department of Health
- Maine Centers for Disease Control
- Michigan Department of Community Health
- Texas Council on Family Violence
- Virginia Department of Health

“We have long known that the public health system is uniquely positioned to identify and help victims of violence, and that strengthening the public health response to violence can do a tremendous amount to help victims and stop abuse,” said FVPF Director of Health Lisa James.

“*Project Connect* is especially important because it will help improve the response to violence in the reproductive health and other programs where women seek care and services.”

In addition to the ten funded sites this program also supports the FVPF to create continuing medical education materials designed to reach thousands of providers and health professional students. The project will use a web-based platform to educate and promote clinical skills for medical and nursing students and providers, giving them continuing education credits as they learn to assess, identify and provide support and intervention with victims of violence in a variety of health settings. In addition, new patient and provider education tools and will promote strategies to create sustainable system changes in health and public health programs nationwide.

“We commend Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services for supporting this initiative,” added FVPF President Esta Soler. “It will help prevent domestic, dating and sexual violence; help train the next generation of health providers to do this work; and help reduce unplanned pregnancy by promoting collaboration between the violence prevention and reproductive and child health care systems.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 1,200 deaths and two million injuries to women from intimate partner violence each year. The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that, on average, four women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each day in this country. The latest research now shows that one in ten American children witnessed domestic violence in the last year and more than one-third of American children will witness family violence by the time they are 17.

More information on Project Connect is available [here](#).

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The Family Violence Prevention Fund works to end violence against women and children around the world, because every person has the right to live free of violence. More information is available at www.endabuse.org.