

Policy Recommendations

In Indian Country, health care providers are often the first responders to domestic violence. To build on the IHS/ACF Domestic Violence Project's lessons and accomplishments, policymakers should fund a permanent program modeled after it, which locates primary prevention, early identification and response to abuse in health care settings and emphasizes community-based partnerships.

An expanded program should include:

- Replication of the promising practices, materials and lessons learned that were developed through partnerships between domestic violence/sexual assault advocates and health care experts working across Indian Country to build the field;
- Integration of domestic violence and sexual assault trainings to promote health care responses in collaboration with community-based advocates;
- Work to strengthen the response to sexual assault by promoting tribal code changes and legal remedies, clinical policies, Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART), forensic equipment and rape kits, and by training sexual assault nurse examiners;
- Efforts to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, and other poor reproductive health outcomes stemming from sexual assault, and integrate training for providers on routine assessment and intervention for violence and reproductive coercion;
- Integrated assessment for lifetime exposure to domestic and sexual violence into forms and electronic health records;
- Public education and outreach to victims with materials and tools that are culturally specific;
- Prevention strategies, such as engaging men as role models and engaging teens in the work to build healthy relationships and prevent teen dating violence;
- Investment in robust evaluation that tracks domestic violence and sexual assault rates and improved health outcomes as a result of health-based interventions.

In addition to expanding the IHS/ACF Domestic Violence Program into a permanent prevention and early intervention program, support should continue for the Innovations in Planned Care for the Indian Health System (IPC), which includes domestic violence as a preventative health screening measure.

About the Family Violence Prevention Fund

For more than three decades, the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) has worked to end violence against women and children around the world. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress in 1994 and reauthorized twice since, the FVPPF breaks new ground every day by reaching men and youth, promoting leadership within communities to ensure that violence prevention efforts become self-sustaining, and transforming the way health care providers, police, judges, employers and others address violence.

About Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project

Mending the Sacred Hoop Technical Assistance Project (MSH-TA) is a Native American program that provides training and technical assistance to our American Indian and Alaskan Native relations in the effort to eliminate violence in the lives of women and their children. We work with villages, reservations, rancherias and pueblos across the United States to improve the justice system, law enforcement, and service provider response to the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in Native communities.

www.endabuse.org

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For more information, contact the Family Violence Prevention Fund: Sally Schaeffer, Senior Public Policy Advocate at 202-682-4663 or Sally@endabuse.org or Anna Marjavi, Program Manager at 415-252-8900 or Anna@endabuse.org.