

Sample newsletter article/web posting

[NAME OF FACILITY/SYSTEM/ASSOCIATION] TO [BEGIN/ANNOUNCE/COMMIT TO] INNOVATIVE NEW PROGRAM SCREEN PATIENTS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On [INSERT DATE] administrators at [Name of Facility/System/Association] announced that the [Facility/System/Association] is joining hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities across the country to begin routinely screening female patients for domestic violence. The announcement came at a [type of event] to mark the fifth annual *Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day* – a national domestic violence awareness day, organized by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF), designed to promote routine health screening of patients for abuse. Domestic violence is a health care problem of epidemic proportions in [state] and throughout this country. [insert local data]

Nationally, nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, according to a 1998 Commonwealth Fund survey. The U.S. Department of Justice found that 1,247 women were murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in 2000—more than 3 women every day. The rates of

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among adolescents and within lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender communities are also staggering.

In addition, research has found that domestic violence is connected to eight of the ten leading health indicators selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to measure the health and well-being of Americans – including access to health care, responsible sexual behavior and substance abuse. The health indicators are part of *Healthy People 2010*, a prevention agenda for the nation developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Health Care Providers Can Help!

“Health care providers are in a unique position to help victims of domestic violence who seek routine or emergency care. Many victims who are murdered by their partners have seen their health care providers to treat previous injuries from abuse,” said [Name and Title of Spokesperson]. “But too often, health care providers miss this golden

opportunity to help a victim of domestic violence because they are not trained to screen patients for abuse. Simply by routinely screening patients for domestic violence and providing them with information and referrals, we can make an enormous difference for victims and their children. In some cases, we can save lives by addressing the both the acute and the immediate consequences of IPV as well as the chronic long term health conditions associated with a history of abuse.”

Many experts say that properly trained doctors and other health care providers are uniquely qualified to intervene to help victims. Yet, a study published in 1999 by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that less than ten percent of primary care physicians routinely screen patients for partner abuse during regular office visits.

In addition to implementing the screening policy, [Name of Facility/System/Association] will [Include information about addition events you have planned to make Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day, such as trainings for health care providers, a community forum, brown bag lunch on abuse, etc.].

[Name of Facility/System/Association]'s screening program will be guided by materials from the FVPF National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, which has developed consensus guidelines applicable to a variety of healthcare settings.

To get involved and learn more about screening, call [Name] at [phone number], or e-mail [Name] at [email address]. Or you can visit the Family Violence Prevention Fund's web site: www.endabuse.org or call the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence at: 1-888-Rx-ABUSE, TTY: 1-800-595-4899. If you are a victim of domestic violence, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE, TDD: 1-800-787-3224.

Sample e-mail

Dear Colleague:

This Wednesday, [NAME OF FACILITY/SYSTEM/ASSOCIATION] is participating in *Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day* – a day to promote routine screening of patients for domestic violence. Why is routine screening so important? A JAMA study found that 30-54 percent of female patients seeking emergency services, 21-66 percent of those seeking general medical care, and up to 20 percent of those seeking prenatal care report experiencing intimate partner abuse. A health care provider can help reduce these staggering numbers by implementing routine screening guidelines into their practice.

To get involved and learn more about screening, call me at [EXT.**], or e-mail [BLANK] at [BLANK]. For further information on responding to domestic violence in the health care setting, visit the Family Violence Prevention Fund's (FVPF) website: www.endabuse.org or call the FVPF's, National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence at 1-888-Rx-ABUSE, TTY: 1-800-595-4889 or e-mail: health@endabuse.org.

A SIMPLE QUESTION CAN SAVE LIVES

by

[NAME OF FACILITY/SYSTEM/ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT/CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

October is *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, and this month our [Facility/System/Association] is implementing a groundbreaking new policy that has the potential to save hundreds of lives and save the institution thousands of dollars. This new system does not rely on the latest technology or high tech medical equipment. It simply involves our health care providers taking the time to ask their female patients one critical question: [Insert screening question your organization will use, ie: Do you feel safe at home?]

Screening patients for domestic violence can be as simple as those [number of words in the screening question, ie: six words], but around this country and in our state too few health care providers routinely screen their patients for abuse. That needs to change. Experience and research have taught us that properly trained doctors and nurses are uniquely qualified to help victims, who seek medical treatment for both routine and emergency care. Yet, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1999 found that less than ten percent of primary care physicians routinely screen patients for partner abuse during regular office visits.

Domestic violence is a health care problem of epidemic proportions in our country, our state and our community. Nationally, nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country every day. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

In our community, [insert state and local data]

These numbers are startling. Just as startling are the wasted opportunities. Each time a health care provider fails to ask a patient about domestic violence, he or she could be missing a critical chance to help a victim of abuse. Many victims who are murdered by their partners have seen their health care providers to treat previous injuries from abuse. Simply by routinely screening patients for domestic violence and providing them with information and referrals, [health care providers/we] can make an enormous difference for battered women and their children – and in some cases [health care providers/we] can save lives.

The direct health effects of domestic violence are devastating. Half of all female victims of intimate violence report an injury of some type, and about 20 percent of them seek medical assistance. The immediate health consequences of IPV can be severe and sometimes fatal. In addition, new research also links a history of victimization to long term chronic and behavioral health risks. Research has found that domestic violence is connected to eight of the ten leading health indicators selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to measure the health and well-being of Americans – including access to health care, responsible sexual behavior and substance abuse. The health indicators are part of *Healthy People 2010*, a prevention agenda for the nation designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health in the United States.

Although health care providers routinely screen women for 15 other potentially deadly but preventable conditions and habits like high blood pressure and cigarette smoking, too often they do not ask their patients about abuse, which may be more likely to affect their health and endanger their lives. This needs to change. There is no excuse for ignoring domestic violence in health care settings

[As health care providers, we/ Health care providers] have the opportunity to help the many hidden victims of domestic violence in our community, but only if [we/they] are properly trained on how to screen patients, identify abuse and provide referrals. That is why at [Name of Facility/System/Association], we're implementing a new routine screening program and giving our doctors and nurses the tools they need to effectively address abuse.

The good news is that domestic violence is a problem we can solve – and health care providers can play an essential role in that critical effort. We are committed to doing our part to end abuse and we hope that more health care providers in our community and across the country will join us in screening patients for domestic violence during *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* and throughout the year.

[NAME (SIGNER OF OPED)] is the [TITLE] of [NAME OF FACILITY/SYSTEM/ ASSOCIATION]

Sample news release

[FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS NEWS RELEASE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

CONTACT:

[Name]

[Phone Number]

[NAME OF FACILITY/SYSTEM/ASSOCIATION]
TO SCREEN PATIENTS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AS PART OF INNOVATIVE NEW PROGRAM

[Date] is [insert one:2003 is the Fifth; 2004 the Sixth; 2005 the Seventh]

[CITY] – [Name of Facility/System/Association] is joining dozens of hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities across the country to begin routinely screening female patients for domestic violence, [Facility/System/Association] administrators announced at a [type of event] here today. The [type of event] was one of hundreds of events scheduled around the country to mark the Fifth Annual *Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day* – a national domestic violence awareness day, organized by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, designed to promote routine health screening for abuse. October is national *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*.

Domestic violence is a health care problem of epidemic proportions in [state] and throughout this country. [Insert state and local data]

Nationally, nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, according to a 1998 Commonwealth Fund survey. On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country every day. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. The rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among adolescents and within lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender communities are also staggering.

“Health care providers are in a unique position to help victims of domestic violence who seek routine or emergency care. Many victims who are murdered by their partners have seen their health care providers to treat previous injuries from abuse,” said [Name and Title of Spokesperson]. “But too often, health care providers miss this opportunity to help a victim of domestic violence because they are not trained to screen patients for abuse. Simply by routinely screening patients for domestic violence and providing them with information and referrals, we can make an enormous difference for victims and their children – and in some cases we can save lives.”

Many experts say that properly trained doctors and other health care providers are uniquely qualified to intervene to help victims. Yet, a study published in 1999 in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found that less than ten percent of primary care physicians routinely screen patients for partner abuse during regular office visits.

“Domestic violence is a health care issue, not just because of the immediate health consequences of abuse, but also because of its links to other life-threatening fatal health conditions,” said Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) President Esta Soler. “Health care providers routinely screen their patients for other potentially deadly but preventable conditions and habits like high blood pressure and cigarette smoking. But far too many health care providers do not ask their patients about abuse. There is no excuse for ignoring domestic violence in health care settings.”

more

Add One

Screening for abuse and properly responding to domestic violence is central to an integrated health practice. Eight out of ten of the leading health indicators selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to measure the health and well-being of Americans – including access to health care, responsible sexual behavior and substance abuse – have been connected to domestic violence. The health indicators are part of *Healthy People 2010*, a prevention agenda for the nation developed by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The agenda is designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health in the United States.

Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day is a project of the FVPPF National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence. As part of *Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day 2003*, health care providers and hospitals are implementing new screening protocols, educating staff about domestic violence, hosting conferences to address domestic violence as a health care issue, setting up information booths at health fairs and in hospital lobbies, and much more. The effort is guided by screening materials from the National Health Resource Center, which provide consensus guidelines applicable to screening in a variety of health care settings.

To further encourage routine screening for domestic violence, in addition to implementing the new screening policy, [Name of Facility/System/Association] is [Include information about addition events you have planned to make Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day, such as trainings for health care providers, a community forum, brown bag lunch on abuse, etc.].

[Add a paragraph describing your Facility/System/Association – When it was founded, how many patients it serves, what kind of services it provides, etc.]

The National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence develops educational resources, training materials and model protocols on domestic violence and screening to help health care providers better serve victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Free domestic violence materials and resources, including screening guidelines, are available to health care providers who call 1-888-RX-ABUSE or 1-800-595-4889 (TTY), or visit the Family Violence Prevention Fund's web site, www.endabuse.org/health. The Health Resource Center provides critical information on domestic violence and health care to tens of thousands of health care providers, institutions, domestic violence service providers, government agencies, researchers and policy makers each year.

For more than two decades, the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) has worked to end violence against women and children around the world, because everyone has the right to a life free of violence. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress in 1994, the FVPPF has continued to break new ground by reaching new audiences including 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 respond to violence.

#

NOTE: Media review copies of the Family Violence Prevention Fund's domestic violence screening guidelines are available from Mariama Vinson at 202/371-1999.