

# Violence Against Women Act of 2005

Domestic violence is a health care problem of epidemic proportions. In the United States, approximately one in four women is abused at some point in her life and a recent study estimated that women make close to 700,000 visits to the health care system per year as a result of injuries due to physical assault. More than 1 in 3 women who seek care in emergency rooms for violence-related injuries were injured by a boyfriend or spouse, and about 324,000 pregnant women are battered each year. In fact, homicide is the second leading cause of death for pregnant and recently pregnant women. [Get the facts.](#)

In addition to the immediate trauma caused by abuse, domestic violence contributes to a number of chronic health problems, including depression, alcohol and substance abuse, and often limits the ability of women to manage other chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Despite these facts, a critical gap remains in the delivery of health care to battered women, with many providers discharging women without addressing the underlying cause of their injuries.

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 included new health programs that would:

1. Train health care providers and students in health professional schools to identify victims of domestic and sexual violence; ensure their immediate safety; document their injuries; and refer them to the appropriate services.
2. Promote public health programs that integrate domestic and sexual violence assessment and intervention into basic care, as well as encourage collaborations between health care providers, public health programs, and domestic violence programs.
3. Provide domestic and sexual violence screening and treatment services in federal health programs by increasing screening, identification, treatment and referrals for lifetime exposure to domestic and sexual violence, focusing specifically on reaching pregnant women and new mothers.
4. Support research and evaluation on effective interventions in the health care setting to improve abused women's health and safety and prevent initial victimization.

## **Additional Resources**

[The Facts on Health Care and Domestic Violence](#)

---

[Read Testimony of Debbie Lee Before the Senate Judiciary Committee](#)

---

[Read Congressional Testimony on Gender Violence and Women's Health](#)

---

[State by State Report Card on Health Care Laws and Domestic Violence](http://endabuse.org/statereport/list.php3) (*Found at <http://endabuse.org/statereport/list.php3>*)

*(Delete link urging readers to “Take Action to Urge Congress to Fully Fund the Health Provisions in VAWA)*