

First-of-its-Kind, National Report Sheds Light on Domestic and Sexual Violence in Wisconsin

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Madison—Today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the 2010 Report from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). The report provides insight into the prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence across the country, and in Wisconsin. NISVS shows that 24 people per minute are victims of physical violence, rape or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States.

"Over the last decade, there have been several national studies that explored the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence," said Patti Seger, executive director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV). "NISVS is unique because a broader range of questions were asked including health impact, coercion or controlling behavior, and reproductive coercion (controlling someone else's reproductive or sexual health)."

The findings are the result of over 18,000 responses to approximately 60 questions.

"NISVS allows us to see domestic and sexual violence through a public health lens," said Pennie Meyers, interim executive director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA). "A public health model which focuses on early education, healthy relationships and community awareness represents the most promising prevention strategy in the field today. This study identifies how prevalent these crimes are and explores the health impact on victims."

Significant findings for Wisconsin in the report include:

- 17.7% (390,000) of Wisconsin women have been raped in their lifetime and 41.3% (912,000) will experience another form of sexual violence.
- 23.7% (507,000) of men in Wisconsin have experienced some form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.
- 714,000 Wisconsin women (32.4%) have been attacked, raped or stalked by an intimate partner. Approximately half a million of these women were fearful or concerned for their safety.
- 280,000 (12.7%) Wisconsin women have been stalked in their lifetime.

Advocates also say they believe NISVS will continue to be an important tool in understanding, reducing, and eliminating violence.

Added Ms. Seger, "I believe NISVS will be valuable because it will track rates annually. Comparing this year's results with future years will provide opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of community responses to sexual assault and domestic violence."

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