



*STATEMENT*

*Health Care and Domestic Violence Leadership Task Force*

The national statistics are staggering. Fourteen percent of all visits to emergency departments across the country are due to acute episodes of partner violence. In the past year, 22 percent to 26 percent of patients reported being assaulted by their partners, and 21 percent of patients said they felt unsafe.

We know that no health care system in the country is immune to this urgent problem. The percentages apply in Madison too. As a Level One Trauma Center, UW Hospital and Clinics provided ED services to 37,000 patients in 2007; more than 2.5 million patients were seen in our out-patient clinic settings last year. This translates to thousands of domestic violence victims seen at UW Health as well as other local hospitals each year.

Domestic violence is a priority throughout our UW Health system. As a leading academic center, we have always been committed to including domestic violence in the curriculum we provide our medical students and residents. We aim to expand our trainings to make sure that our staff are conducting screenings confidentially, safely and effectively. We look forward to working with the leadership task force to expand our education of health care professionals so that they fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence and the most appropriate interventions needed to address the health impact domestic violence has on our patients.

Furthermore, as a leading research institution, we are eager to engage in research that identifies the most appropriate protocols for screening domestic violence. We understand that screenings and interventions conducted in the ED are different from those that take place in our in-patient units and different still from those in many of our out-patient clinics. We want to ensure that we provide a confidential place for patients to disclose their situations and seek assistance, no matter where in our system they may be.

We look forward to designating representatives to participate in WCADV's Health Care and Domestic Violence Leadership Task Force. We are eager to share UW Health initiatives and research agendas and to work cooperatively with these leading partners to develop best practices and model protocols for screening and responding. We pledge to increase our collaborations with community resources that best serve the victims of domestic violence.