

WCADV – WCASA Statement
STATEMENT OF PATTI SEGER
Executive Director, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Good Morning. I am Patti Seger, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. With me today is Armintie Moore-Hammonds, Associate Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. We thank our partners and members of the media for joining us today. Special thanks to WPS Health Insurance for hosting this important event.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Governor Jim Doyle has proclaimed today “Health Cares About Violence Against Women Day.”

In doing so, the Governor, and our partners here today recognize that violence against women is a serious problem with enormous health consequences. The incidence of domestic violence experienced by patients seen in both emergency departments and primary care settings lead to only one conclusion: violence against women is a major public health problem. Between one in eight and one in four patients in primary care settings have experienced IPV in the past year; 25% report physical violence in past year and 15% report injury in the past year.

The barriers to a woman leaving an abusive relationship are significant. Fear, shame, financial obstacles, thinking it’s her fault and trying to keep her family together are just a few. Isolation and being unaware of community resources are huge factors. Our work in the domestic violence and sexual assault movements these past 30 years has always focused on empowering victims to make their own choices and to assist them in planning for their safety and health, and that of their children.

We recognize the critical role of health care providers in screening for domestic violence and offering safe, confidential assistance. We are not asking health care providers to “fix” domestic violence. We ask only that they engage in important steps to help patients understand that domestic violence is wrong, it is not their fault and that no one deserves to be hurt or harmed. We urge them to display these posters and use these screening tools. We ask that they screen patients for domestic violence and sexual assault and that if a patient discloses this abuse, that they affirm their experience and offer assistance. They can address acute and long-term medical consequences of the abuse, reduce their isolation and refer them to community resources.

Across Wisconsin, our local domestic violence programs and our statewide agency are partnering with health care systems. We can assist in training health care providers. We offer these screening cards. We can offer safety planning materials. Our programs offer 24 hour per day hotlines and emergency shelters. Our programs can meet with your patients in confidential locations, including your offices.

Over please

We are very pleased to be announcing the formation today of a Health Care and Domestic Violence Leadership Task Force. With representatives from medical and nursing schools, provider groups, local and statewide advocates and insurers, we can together help victims to safety and improve their health and the health of our communities.

STATEMENT OF ARMINTIE MOORE-HAMMONDS

Associate Director, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Good Morning, I am Armintie Moore-Hammonds, Associate Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and I would also like to thank WPS Health Insurance for hosting this press conference. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault is encouraged to see all these different organizations coming together to end violence against women. Violence against women includes sexual assault, as many as 1 in 3 women have been a victim of sexual assault in her lifetime and 40% to 87% of women who are sexually assaulted show signs of genital injury (HIV and Sexual Violence Against Women. (1998). Health Canada.). The health care impacts of sexual assault can be long term as well as short term; therefore the importance for Health care providers to help victims by connecting them to local agencies and respecting confidentiality is crucial. By working together we can strengthen the care provided to victims.

