



Wisconsin Medical Society

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Wisconsin Medical Society supports initiative to increase domestic violence screening

Madison, October 7, 2008—The Wisconsin Medical Society (Society) recognizes the significant impact domestic violence has on patients throughout Wisconsin and is pleased to join with WPS Health Insurance, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Wisconsin Nurses Association and Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation to recognize “*Health Cares About Violence Against Women Day.*”

“Health care professionals routinely screen for tobacco use, high blood pressure and high cholesterol in their patients, but many miss the opportunity to screen for domestic violence. That doesn’t have to be the case,” said Wisconsin Medical Society Past President Paul Wertsch, MD. “By taking a few moments to ask patients some simple questions, physicians can emphasize to them that domestic violence is intolerable, and if it is happening to them, it’s not their fault. Physicians can also refer patients to community resources and make suggestions regarding their safety. We can let them know they are not alone and help is available.”

Trauma, severe headaches, pregnancy complications, depression and substance abuse are just a few of the serious health consequences related to domestic violence. Additionally, children who witness this abuse have increased health problems, including speech and mobility delays, attention deficit disorder, higher incidence of alcohol and drug use, anxiety and even suicide.

The Wisconsin Medical Society supports efforts to implement best practices and standard protocols for screening for domestic violence and, as part of this initiative, will distribute pocket screening cards and make other resources available to physicians. The screening cards feature guidelines for routine assessment and intervention for domestic violence.

“We recognize that physicians, nurses and other health care professionals play critical role in the lives of their patients and are concerned about their overall health and safety,” added Dr. Wertsch. “We are committed to being part of the solution.”

With more than 12,000 members dedicated to the best interests of their patients, the Wisconsin Medical Society is the largest association of medical doctors in the state and a trusted source for health policy leadership since 1841. Visit www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org. Your Doctor. Your Health.