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STATEMENT OF WISCONSIN NURSES ASSOCIATION Health Cares About Violence Against Women Day

- The Wisconsin Nurses Association is the voice for professional registered nurses in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Nurses Association is nurses caring for nurses and nursing, by preserving, supporting and advancing the profession of nursing. Our purpose is to foster high standards of nursing; stimulate and promote the professional development of nurses and advance their economic and general welfare; and work for the improvement of health standards and the availability of health care services for all people.
- Many of our nurse colleagues have seen first hand the impact of family violence, child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault on the patients we care for. It is for these sad and traumatic reasons; WNA remains committed to partnering with key advocacy groups and our health professional colleagues in supporting policies, education, research and best practices that can effectively address these incidents and issue that undermine the basic fabric of our society.
- WNA recognizes that a great majority of victims may not call law enforcement or seek out meaningful support or shelter. What we do know is many of these victims do have some encounter with our health care delivery system. Often time the first health care professional that the victim will have contact with is a registered nurse. It is during this encounter that the RN may be the first non-family member that a victim may disclose these private and ugly secrets. It is for this reason, WNA sees the RN as this victim's first responder. This RN will need to be ready and able to offer support and assistance.
- The role of the RN is to assess and determine a course of action, that includes arranging for treatment and care for her patient. When the situation arises to evaluate for family, domestic and personal safety, the nurse must be able to must establish a caring, safe and emotionally supportive environment. Once established, the nurse carefully listens and documents her findings. RNs are in an important position as they can provide important information, identify and obtain the services of a victim advocate so that care can be provided as soon as possible.
- WNA stands ready to continue our partnership with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Coalition Against Sexual Assault. WNA will work in raising awareness within our nursing community about our role in listening, treating and referring to other care and service professionals and agencies. WNA believes that we can instill hope to women whose quality of life consists of on-going physical and emotional trauma.
- WNA is committed to improving the competencies of Wisconsin's 70,000 RNs so that each and every encounter with her female patient consist of an assessment to determine if domestic, family or sexual violence is part of her daily life. We will know that we have succeeded when we no longer have to hold **Health Cares About Violence Against Women Day**.