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50,000 Americans Touched by Domestic Violence Programs in One Day; First-of-its-Kind Survey Documents Extensive Reach of Domestic Violence Programs

Washington, DC – March 13, 2007 – In a single day, domestic violence programs served more than 50,000 adults and children in the United States. This astonishing data comes from the release of *Domestic Violence Counts: the National Census of Domestic Violence Services* (NCDVS). Conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence and health economists at Harvard University, the NCDVS is the most recent data documenting the number of individuals served by domestic violence programs. In addition to providing a national snapshot, the NCDVS report also includes state-level data.

More than 1,200 domestic violence programs from across the country (62%) participated in the survey, giving advocates and researchers a glimpse into the number of individuals seeking services, the types of services requested and the number of service requests that went unmet due to a lack of resources. However, because the survey was not able to obtain a count from all domestic violence programs, advocates say the data only skims the surface.

“While the census provides advocates and policymakers with tremendous insight into the need for domestic violence services, the sobering fact is that there are still many more victims who need our help,” said Else. “We need to ensure that resources are available to not only meet current needs, but to also increase public awareness so that all victims know help is available.”

The NCDVS collected a national, unduplicated count of adults and children who received life-saving services from domestic violence programs on November 2, 2006. During the 24-hour survey period 47,864 received direct services, including:

- more than 14,000 Americans sought refuge in emergency shelters
- almost 8,000 lived in transitional housing facilities
- more than 25,000 received non-residential services such as counseling, legal advocacy and children's support groups

However, the survey found there was still a significant need for services. More than 10% of requests for services were referred elsewhere because domestic violence programs did not have the resources to aid them.

“Funding cuts preclude us from employing an overnight advocate,” reported a domestic violence program in California which participated in the census. “Many times lack of overnight coverage is a deterrent for victims seeking shelter.”

In addition to providing shelter and advocacy services, domestic violence programs invested a significant amount of time and energy raising public awareness in their communities. During the survey period, domestic violence programs informed more than 40,000 Americans about domestic violence, available resources, and what they could do to help prevent the violence.

The census provides critical data supporting advocates' efforts to secure full funding for the Violence Against Women Act of 2005. Congress unanimously passed the legislation in December 2005, but since has not passed an appropriations package that includes funding for new programs.

Participating programs logged an unduplicated count of adults and children accessing their services between 8 a.m. EST on November 2, 2006 to 7:59 a.m. EST on November 3, 2006. This “snapshot” approach allowed researchers to document the scope of services without collecting victim-identifying data.

“Individuals seeking domestic violence services are often in immediate danger and need to keep their location a secret. Unfortunately, most research methods place victims at risk,” said Cindy Southworth, NNEDV's Safety Net Technology Project Director. “The National Census of Domestic Violence Services was designed to protect the safety and confidentiality needs of victims.”

Learn more ... About National Network to End Domestic Violence

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a membership and advocacy organization representing the 54 state and U.S. territory domestic violence coalitions. NNEDV is the voice of these coalitions, their more than 2,000 local domestic violence member programs, and the millions of domestic violence survivors who turn to them for services. In 2000 and 2005, NNEDV members all across the country played a crucial role in the reauthorization of VAWA. Through its extensive state and grassroots network, NNEDV continues to mobilize a powerful constituency to make their voices heard in Congress. Website: <http://www.nnedv.org>