



KANSAS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

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Domestic violence services working, more outreach needed *New report indicates services help victims, but not all victims seek services*

Domestic violence is the third most important women's health issue in Kansas according to a new report from the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University.

The report, between the Docking Institute and the Governor's Grants Program, assessed multiple aspects of domestic violence including domestic violence services available throughout Kansas. The findings indicate that women who seek intervention services are successful in improving their situation and that if more women sought services, domestic violence could be dramatically reduced.

"I am committed to addressing the problem of domestic violence in the Kansas," Governor Kathleen Sebelius said. "Conducting outreach and improving access to services for domestic violence victims and survivors is an important next step for the state."

The report is based on a random telephone survey and a survey of victims seeking help from Kansas domestic violence programs. With more than 2,500 telephone respondents, there was an overall domestic violence victimization rate of 10.1 percent. Based on the most current population of women 18 and older, there is an estimated 106,419 women who were victims of domestic violence in Kansas this past year.

In 2004, Governor Sebelius signed an executive order establishing the Governor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board. The Fatality Review Board reviews all adult domestic violence related fatalities in Kansas, describes trends and patterns in circumstances surrounding these fatalities, recommends improvements to prevent future fatalities, and determines if adequate resources and trainings are in place for those who respond to domestic violence crimes.

This year the Governor provided additional grant money to Attorney General Paul Morrison's office allowing him to form a Domestic Violence Unit to train county prosecutors and law enforcement officials, assist them in prosecutions, and secure grant money for community domestic violence shelters.

"I've been fighting for domestic violence victims for over 20 years and this unit provides additional resources for women across the state dealing with abuse everyday" said Morrison. "This crime effects every community in our state and the more services we can offer victims, the safer our families and children will be."

The report by the Docking Institute indicates that 10 percent of Kansas women over the age of 18 are victims of domestic violence. Of those seeking intervention services, nearly ninety-one percent reported that their situation improved since receiving services.

Three areas in which women felt domestic violence services helped the most were:

- Helping them to be ready to make changes to improve their situation;
- Feeling safer because of help received; and
- Using skills learned to improve their situation.

The report also offered several policy considerations including promoting the success of victims' services as a way to encourage others to seek help, increasing awareness of services such as the state's toll-free hotline: 1-888-END-ABUSE, and ensuring health care benefits for victims.

The Governor's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board received a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to develop a domestic violence awareness campaign to increase awareness of the problem. The *'Do Something. Today'* campaign is a public health initiative using strategic awareness building and focused educational tools to reduce domestic violence incidents in Kansas and to create a culture of intolerance for such behavior. The Board continues to seek funding to implement the campaign and the Docking Report supports the need for such a campaign.

For a copy of the report at the Docking Institute's website use the following link to find "Kansas Domestic Violence Victim Services Awareness, Use, and Satisfaction Study (2007)": <http://www.fhsu.edu/docking/reports.shtml>; or access it via the governor's web site at <http://www.governor.ks.gov/grants/policies/docs/DockingReport.pdf>

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