



Domestic Violence and Health Care Costs

Domestic violence is a health care problem of epidemic proportions. In addition to the immediate trauma caused by abuse, domestic violence contributes to a number of chronic health problems, including depression, alcohol and substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and often limits the ability of victims to manage other chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Despite these facts, a critical gap remains in the delivery of health care to victims of domestic violence. Many providers discharge a victim with only the injuries that were treated, leaving the underlying cause of those injuries not addressed.

Prevalence:

- ❖ 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience domestic violence (CDC, 2010).
 - Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15-44 in the United States.
- ❖ Arizona ranks 4th nationwide in the number of domestic violence related deaths.
 - In 2012, there were 116 domestic violence related homicides in Arizona (Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2012).
 - Every 3 days, in Arizona a life is lost to domestic violence.

Health Consequences of Domestic Violence:

- ❖ In 1998, 37% of all women who sought medical care were in hospital emergency rooms for injuries caused by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).
- ❖ Nationally, the costs of intimate partner violence exceed \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services (CDC, 2003).
- ❖ Domestic violence costs businesses \$11,035 every minute of every day for medical expenses and lost productivity (CDC, 2003).

Children's Health and Domestic Violence:

- ❖ Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to exhibit behavioral and physical health problems including depression, anxiety, and violence towards peers. They are also more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution and commit sexual assault crimes (Graham-Bermann, Seng, 2005).
- ❖ Research has found that 50% of those that assault their wives frequently assault their children. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country (U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, A Nation's Shame: Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States: Fifth Report, 1995).