



GUAM COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT & FAMILY VIOLENCE

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New Survey Presents Snapshot of Domestic Violence Services in the U.S.

[HAGÁTÑA, GUAM] – A new survey conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) reveals telling information about domestic violence services in the U.S.

In one 24-hour period, twenty-eight victims of domestic violence and their children across Guam received life-saving services from local domestic violence organizations. Domestic violence victim advocates with Victim Advocates Reaching Out (VARO) answered three emergency hotline calls. At the same time, one request for services went unmet, largely due to lack of funding.

As communities continue to experience job loss and decreased community resources, programs are reporting a rise in demand for services. Among the domestic violence organizations on Guam, **100%** of the programs reported an increase of demand for services from survivors of domestic violence. At the same time, **67%** of the programs reported a decrease in funding.

Though the economy does not cause domestic violence, factors associated with economic uncertainties can increase the severity and frequency of abuse. At the same time, options for survivors to escape can be more limited. More than 80 percent of local domestic violence programs reported and increased demand for their services while nearly the same number reported decreases in funding.

“The economy is exacerbating domestic violence, and victim advocates across the country are struggling to do more with less” said Sue Else, president of NNEDV. “Despite the immense challenges, local programs are providing life-saving services to so many survivors of domestic and sexual violence.” Each year, NNEDV conducts a 24-hour survey of local domestic violence programs. On September 15, 2010, despite the difficulty to raise funds, domestic violence programs nationwide provided services to more than 70,000 adults and children in one day alone. Other national data include:

- More than 929 crisis hotline calls were answered every hour.
- More than 9,500 requests for services went unmet, mostly due to funding shortfalls.

- More than 30,000 individuals attended 1,240 training sessions provided by local domestic violence programs to help prevent violence and intervene early in cases of abuse.

For Guam, in one day alone twenty-eight domestic violence victims were housed in emergency shelters or transitional housing provided by Alee Shelter with Catholic Social Services. A shelter worker noted, "At times there are service gaps for women and children who had to flee their residence due to domestic violence. Upon exit from the temporary stay shelter, some women are left with no place to go and cannot afford accommodations on their own. There is a need to assist these women and families who do not qualify for the housing program."

Across the nation on September 15, 2010, three women were murdered by their intimate partners. Thirty-six babies were born to mothers living in domestic violence shelters. Three-hundred-ninety-one survivors started new jobs. Three men committed suicide – one after murdering his wife, another after a failed attempt to kill his girlfriend, and the third after holding his partner hostage and a standoff with the police.

In 2010, 1,746 local domestic violence programs, or 91 percent, submitted their 24-hour counts for September 15. All of the domestic violence programs on Guam participated in the survey. The full National Domestic Violence Counts 2010 are available online at <http://www.nnedv.org/census>. Sue Else, NNEDV president, will address participants on Monday, March 7, at the Regional Summit: 'Creating Safe, Healthy & Violence-Free Island Communities' sponsored by the Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence. The Regional Summit activities are being held at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort and open to the public.

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The Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence, established in 2006 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, is comprised of non-profit organizations, government allies, community individuals and other Coalition partners who aim to stop sexual assault and family violence on Guam. The Coalition focuses on community outreach, education, and training. Website – <http://guamcoalition.org/>.

NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. Its members include the 56 state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence. It works closely with them to understand the needs of domestic violence victims and advocacy programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for the past 15 years, after leading efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit www.nnedv.org.