



City
of

Milwaukee

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**MILWAUKEE COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
REPORT TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Third and Fourth Quarter 2009**

I. The Commission's Purpose, Responsibilities and Duties

City of Milwaukee Ordinance Number 320-22(2) defines the purpose of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (the Commission) as:

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Milwaukee commission on domestic violence and sexual assault is to increase the safety for victims of domestic violence and their children and for victims of sexual assault, and to hold abusers accountable for their violent behavior.

The responsibilities and duties of the Commission are set forth in City of Milwaukee Ordinance Number 320-22(5)(a) - Responsibilities and Duties:

The commission is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the community's response to domestic violence and sexual assault by promoting communication and collaboration among members of law enforcement, victim's advocates, court staff, school personnel, health care providers, abuser programs, corrections officials, policy makers, children's service providers and prosecutors.

II. Activities in Support of Responsibilities and Duties for Third/Fourth Quarter 2009

A. **General Duties/Responsibilities –**

1. **Regularly scheduled meetings** - The Commission meets both at City Hall and in a variety of community facilities in order to connect community partners to the Commission members and to better acquaint the Commissioners with the community partners and resources. During this reporting period the Commission met at Milwaukee County Courthouse, Children's Health Alliance, Milwaukee Police Department District # 3, and the Parenting Network.
2. **Strategic Plan Development/Implementation** – The Commission developed an overall strategic plan in March 2008 and a Sexual Assault Services Strategic Plan in January of 2009. The Commission has made progress on the majority of strategic plan goals for both the 2008 and 2009 plans. The Commissioners have elected to continue to work to implement the 2008 and 2009 plan during 2010.

B. 320-23(5) b-1 – Training for current officers/recruits of MPD - The Commission coordinator provides ongoing domestic violence training to the recruit class at the Milwaukee Police Department Safety Academy. In addition, the Commission coordinator and several Commissioners presented at / participated in a special day-long in-service training for the Sensitive Crimes Division on November 18th.

C. **320-23(5) b-2 – Policy review to improve response to victims –**

1. **MMDI** - Grant which is dedicated to improving policies and procedures to ensure accessible services for victims with disabilities. Commission staff is part of the grant funded planning committee partnering with the Task Force on Family Violence, Independence First and Milwaukee County's Disability Services to develop a needs assessment and eventually a strategic plan on how agencies can best serve disabled victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Met regularly with planning committee, attended all listening sessions with various agencies and governmental entities. Co-hosted site visit by federal funders.
2. **IPV Consortium**- This partnership between health care providers and local domestic violence agencies focuses on developing domestic violence screening policies to be used by local health care providers (including emergency rooms and primary care physicians in the Milwaukee area.) Met regularly with 5 area hospitals in partnership.

D. 320-23(5) b-3 – Monitor and promote legislation - The Commission closely monitored the State budget activity, with special attention to funding for domestic violence and sexual assault initiatives as well as special attention to the funding for prosecution of domestic violence and other crimes.

E. 320-23(5) b-4 – Community awareness aimed at intervention and prevention –

1. Literature Distribution / Responding to Citizen and Community Calls–

The Commission distributed approximately one thousand pieces of literature to victim’s advocates, health care providers and non-profit organizations. The most popular publication is the “You Are Not Alone” brochure which features a comprehensive listing of resources (medical, legal, shelter, counseling etc.) for those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. The brochure has been edited and updated with new numbers and to reflect the recent merger of the Task Force on Family Violence with Sojourner Truth House.

The Commission responded to many calls from community members and community-based agencies seeking resources on matters of domestic violence and sexual assault. Callers seeking support or resources included: private citizens seeking connection to sexual assault resources; citizens seeking shelter; questions from area nurses on sexual assault reporting and police follow-up; legal system partners at the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s office; Department of Corrections probation agents; at least seven non-profit providers; several health care systems requesting training and You Are Not Alone literature; area high school instructors seeking instructional/educational support for students on topics such as dating violence.

In addition, the unfortunate attack on the Mayor stemming from a domestic violence incident in August resulted in many phone calls for resources, referrals, statistics and also many get-well wishes for the Mayor as he recuperated from his injuries. The Commission acted as a resource for media questions regarding the cycle of domestic violence.

2. Resource Tables – The Commission staffed a resource table/distributed literature at: The 9th Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month Open House sponsored by the Department of Corrections, held at St. Aemilian-Lakeside.

3. Training Health Care Workers – Commission coordinator presented at Aurora Medical “Safe at Home” Conference for nurses, nurse assistants and social workers in the Aurora system. developed a training program for health care workers to train them to screen patients for domestic violence related issues. Commission coordinator conducted five lunch hour trainings for Prospect Commons Medical Clinic (Columbia/St. Mary’s network), training approximately one hundred and twenty five health care workers who serve city of Milwaukee residents.

4. Hmong Healthy Relationships Conference – Coordinator gave presentation to approximately 100 participants from Milwaukee Hmong community regarding resources available for domestic violence and sexual assault, what a

healthy relationship looks like, domestic violence laws in the State of Wisconsin.

5. **IndependenceFirst Teen Leadership Training** – Coordinator gave two interactive presentations on teen dating violence and domestic violence prevention for Milwaukee disabled teen leaders.
6. **Reach In/ Reach Out – Archdiocese of Milwaukee Youth Program** – Coordinator gave presentation on domestic violence, sexual assault, teen pregnancy and teen dating violence to teen leaders attending the Archdiocese of Milwaukee summer youth program.
7. **Islamic Society of Milwaukee & Muslim American Society First Annual Family Conference** – Coordinator attended the first annual conference held at the ISM Community Center and presented on domestic violence causes and resources in Milwaukee, both individually and as part of a panel.
8. **Trip to Cleveland Rape Crisis Center** - As part of a larger Milwaukee Sexual Assault Services Needs Assessment being done by The Healing Center, and pursuant to the strategic plan of the Commission’s sexual assault committee, we are interested in improving services for survivors of sexual assault. To that end the Coordinator took a trip (paid for by the State of Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance) along with a team of Commission members and community partners to visit the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center. We studied the Cleveland model and looked at ways we could use the things going right in Cleveland as inspiration for new directions here.

III. Continuing Efforts

- A. **IPV Consortium** – Commission coordinator is member of consortium that partners health care providers in Milwaukee with local domestic violence agencies and the Commission to develop and implement comprehensive domestic violence screening tools to be used by health care providers throughout the various systems. This includes developing recommended policies for screening and documentation as well as developing training techniques to present domestic violence information as well as screening techniques to health care providers throughout the city.
- B. **South Eastern Directors Group** – Commission coordinator meets monthly with directors and representatives from the domestic violence agencies and shelters to discuss barriers to services, funding sources and grant identification, and to coordinate services.
- C. **DELTA Project**– Commission staff co-wrote 5 year progress report on Delta project’s work. Also prepared and participated in two site-visits. Co-developing informational pamphlet for area providers who serve Hmong clients based on Delta

findings to date. Arranged for Delta project to update Commission members at Commission meeting.

- D. Homicide Review Commission (Adult and Pediatric)** – The Commission participated in monthly reviews of the homicides in Milwaukee that are a result of domestic violence, one session is for the adult victims and another session is for reviewing the pediatric deaths. The goal is to examine each individual case to try to identify opportunities for intervention that may have been missed, areas for improvement in service delivery, and also common factors that can be identified in different cases to help us develop prevention strategies.
- E. Office of Justice Assistance Statewide VAWA Planning Committee** – Commission coordinator continues to serve on the Committee and has met regularly with them to discuss domestic violence and sexual assault issues as they affect Milwaukee, to identify grant funding sources for Milwaukee agencies and partners and to contribute to discussions on statewide domestic violence/sexual assault issues of concern.

IV. Additional Activities/Comments

- A. Executive committee elections** - In addition to the above-listed activities, the Commission held elections for Chair and Vice Chair positions in December, 2009. The newly elected Chair is Cathy Arney, from Pathfinders. The newly elected Vice Chairs are Mariana Rodriguez of the Latina Resource Center and Julie Bock of the LGBT Community Center of Milwaukee.
- B. Co-Host Milwaukee Domestic Violence Homicide Press Conference** – The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence partnered with the Mayor, the Commission, Sojourner Family Peace Center, District Attorney John Chisholm and other community partners to release domestic violence homicide statistics and honor homicide victims of domestic violence. The press conference was held in the City Hall Rotunda.