



For Immediate Release

NEW NATIONAL PREVALENCE DATA ABOUT SEXUAL AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE RELEASED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

Nationally, nearly half of all women and one in five men 18 years old and older reported experiencing some form of sexual violence during their lifetime. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) conducted by the CDC is the first attempt in over 10 years to systematically study a nationally representative sample of victims of sexual and intimate partner violence. “This data helps fill a gap in our understanding of sexual and intimate partner violence from a public health perspective,” states Katie Hanna, Statewide Director of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV). “A public health survey goes beyond justice system incident based reporting systems which require victims to come forward.”

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV) and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) are pleased that data about domestic and sexual violence are being collected in a systematic and nationally-representative way. “This new survey data will help us better understand the prevalence, impact and health consequences of sexual and intimate partner violence on victims in Ohio,” stated Nancy Neylon, Executive Director of ODVN.

In the future the CDC anticipates that this survey will be conducted annually through 2013 and beyond for more uniform reporting of prevalence. Prevalence data helps local programs and state planners understand how widespread the problem is in Ohio. Additionally, because specific questions were asked about victimization, this survey will demonstrate the link between violence and long term health consequences. Understanding the magnitude and prevalence of sexual and intimate partner violence and its perpetration is a giant step towards a public health approach to prevention.

The NISVS 2010 Summary Report presents data from the first year of data collection, based on 16,507 completed interviews (9,086 adult women and 7,421 adult men) in the general population sample. The CDC states that “Although no group is free from violence, consistent patterns have emerged showing that women, young people, and racial and ethnic minorities are the most heavily affected subpopulations in the United States.”

State-level data in this report includes lifetime estimates of victimization, and does not include data on victimization during the year prior to completing the survey. In Ohio, the data matched or was higher than the national average for lifetime prevalence for rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. The survey results showed the significant negative

health impact of sexual and intimate partner violence including higher rates of diabetes, asthma, chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and other adverse health outcomes. “As Ohio leaders in the movement to end sexual and intimate partner violence begin to digest the results of this survey it is important to keep a few caveats in mind,” suggest both Hanna and Neylon:

- NISVS data is based on self-report. Individuals may not feel comfortable disclosing or may not recall past incidents of sexual and intimate partner violence;
- Sexual and intimate partner violence remain significantly under-reported to law enforcement;
- Barriers still exist for victims to access resources such as healthcare and other services. Barriers include:
 - Lack of understanding about the problem and/or how to access resources
 - Lack of appropriate screening, intervention, and prevention in healthcare settings
 - Lack of trauma informed care responses by those who provide services
 - Lack of public will to solve and/or fund services to address the problem
 - Culturally relevant prevention and intervention services as well as funding for those services is needed

Over time, the NISVS will provide Ohio with multiple years of data and reliable state-level estimates to better inform prevention and response in our state. By understanding the problem, we can identify and implement effective interventions to prevent sexual and intimate partner violence and to provide survivors with a system of care to prevent future victimization. Both Hanna and Neylon agree, “Working together, we can decrease stigma for survivors - our friends, family members and co-workers who have been victimized - so that they know they are not alone and are empowered to reach out to the support that is available and has helped others like them.

According to Rebecca Cline, Prevention Programs Director at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, “The number of lives impacted by sexual and intimate partner violence is unacceptable. We have an obligation as individuals and as members of our communities to prevent the violence, support survivors with evidenced based interventions, hold perpetrators accountable, and demand that ending intimate partner and sexual violence become a state and national priority.”

###END###

Contact:

- Katie Hanna, Statewide Director, Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, email: khanna@oaesv.org; phone: 216.658.1381 ext. 125
- Nancy Neylon, Executive Director, Ohio Domestic Violence Network, email: nancyn@odvn.org; phone: 614-781-9651