

**Contact: Linda Isakson
NDCAWS/CASAND
701-255-6240, ext. 24**

NDCAWS Releases 2009 Statistics ***Increase in Services To Victims of Domestic Violence***

Bismarck – The North Dakota Council on Abused Women’s Services in ND (NDCAWS), which is made up of 21 local domestic violence crisis intervention centers around the state, has released its 2009 statistics on domestic violence.

In 2009, the local crisis centers provided services to 4,569 new domestic violence victims. This number reflects a 7% increase from the same period in 2008, and a 9% increase from the same period in 2007. Also in 2009, 4,874 incidents of domestic violence were reported, which is a 6% increase from the same reporting period in 2008, and a 9% increase from 2007. At least 75% of the victims served were physically abused, and 94% of the victims were women.

A number of reasons could explain the increase in services. In the past year, NDCAWS and its local crisis centers provided trainings and advanced trainings to many professionals across the state including: advocates, law enforcement, judges, clergy, the media and nurses. Community collaborations are an important aspect of reaching victims of domestic violence and holding batterer’s accountable. “No single agency can meet the needs of all victims and children. We need community engagement to prevent and address domestic violence,” states Linda Isakson, Intervention and Prevention Team Lead for NDCAWS. “Coordination is crucial in assuring that our policies and resources are most effective in enhancing safety to individuals, families, and communities.”

The economic downturn within the nation is creating an influx of people into our state, including our rural communities. An increase in population can cause a higher demand for services from our service providers. The economy does not cause domestic violence, but in abusive relationships, factors associated with a bad economy can increase in frequency and severity. The economy can also limit options for victims to escape, especially in rural areas.

Public education campaigns conducted throughout the year may also explain the increase in services. NDCAWS is reaching more victims, including victims in rural North Dakota. Domestic violence was also highlighted in many media stories within the state and the nation in 2009, including well publicized celebrity cases. Four North Dakota domestic violence homicides/suicides were covered in media stories in 2009. Media coverage of such cases creates interest in more education on domestic violence and in understanding the effects domestic violence has on our families.

“We feel the impacts of domestic violence everywhere – on families, in our communities and in social services throughout our state,” said Linda Isakson, “While we have made progress in this area, there is still much to do. We will continue to seek funding on a state and national level to strengthen services and make services more accessible even in the most remote areas of North Dakota.”

For more information please contact Linda Isakson at 255-6240 ext. 24. NDCAWS encourages media to contact their local domestic violence agencies for a local perspective on these statistics. To locate a program in your community visit www.ndcaws.org or call 255-6240 ext. 22.

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ND Council on Abused Women’s Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault

The ND Council on Abused Women’s Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a membership organization representing the 21 ND domestic violence and sexual assault crisis centers. It is the mission of NDCAWS/CASAND to provide leadership and support in the identification, intervention, and prevention of domestic and sexual violence. For more information, please visit www.ndcaws.org