

PURPOSE

The Governor's Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Task Force was formed by Governor Peter Shumlin through Executive Order No. 16-11 (see appendices) on November 11, 2011. The Task Force was charged with developing recommendations for the administration to enhance primary prevention efforts for domestic and sexual violence in Vermont. Task Force members hailed from a variety of state and private entities with a stake in violence prevention (see membership list in sidebar).

METHODOLOGY

During the life span of the Task Force, members formed a number of workgroups to collect and analyze data about existing prevention resources, unmet needs, and priorities within the prevention community. This work included:

- A survey of prevention practitioners to establish the current landscape of Vermont's violence prevention programs;
- Benchmarking of successful social change campaigns in other domains of public health (for example, seatbelt usage and shaken baby syndrome);
- A survey of men's attitudes about violence against women;
- A review of prevention work on college campuses;
- An employer survey;
- A review of available state and national data; and
- A review of military practice.

FINDINGS

This work created more than 70 recommendations which were synthesized into seven priority action areas that are

GOVERNOR'S PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

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foundational to coordination and sustainability, have broad impact, and leverage current opportunities and energy. Within each priority area there are low- or no-cost activities proposed along with recommendations that will require greater investment in prevention infrastructure in the State. A review of resource availability found that tangible products like posters are more likely to be funded than staff time for planning and collaboration. This creates a tension for preventionists who are committed to developing promising practice but who lack the basic infrastructure to support this work. Without designated prevention funding, program administrators are faced with the untenable choice between funding critical services to victims of violence and diverting funds for prevention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Support the creation and implementation of a comprehensive state plan to prevent domestic and sexual violence.** The plan should, at a minimum: identify focus areas for researchers, practitioners and funders; articulate actionable and measurable outcomes; create shared definitions and evaluation tools; and align with other public health prevention initiatives.
- 2. Support and help develop a statewide, multi-pronged prevention campaign which:**
 - a. is informed by a coalition of practitioners, researchers, and community stakeholders;
 - b. targets specific populations with strategic messages; and
 - c. uses multiple platforms to promote prevention messages, including both traditional and new media.
- 3. Build capacity for bystander engagement strategies for all ages.**
- 4. Increase the engagement of men in domestic and sexual violence prevention by:**
 - a. providing education, training and support for men interested in working to end violence;
 - b. creating a clearinghouse for men to locate opportunities to play a role in the work at both the local and statewide level; and
 - c. facilitating the formation of men's outreach teams in collaboration with community-based programs working to end violence.
- 5. Strengthen Vermont college campuses' response to prevention of domestic and sexual violence by providing:**
 - a. tools for planning ongoing, multi-component education;
 - b. materials targeted to Vermont's college students; and
 - c. best practice prevention topics and support resources.

6. Enhance data collection and accessibility through the creation of a central data collection site.

7. Establish a Violence Prevention Program Coordinator at the State level.

Each of these recommendations is discussed further in this report. It is this Task Force's hope that ongoing discussion between the State and domestic and sexual violence prevention community will continue to develop and enhance implementation and alignment of prevention activities throughout Vermont.