

Health Matters for Rural Women

OCTOBER 2007

A Publication of the **Arizona Rural Health Office at the University of Arizona Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health**, in collaboration with the **Arizona Rural/Frontier Women's Health Coordinating Center**

Special Interest Articles

Domestic Violence and Health	1
Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence	2
Breast Cancer Awareness Month.....	3

Individual Highlights

Linking Domestic Violence and Public Health	1
Supporting Awareness and Prevention	2
Experiences of Immigrant Victims.....	2
Breast Cancer Facts	3
Health Literacy Study.....	3
Resources and Events	4

Safety, health, and well-being

October is a busy month and is another month asking for awareness. October is both Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Both of these issues have a far reach, affecting rural women, families, and communities. It is useful to step back and reflect on the ongoing need for awareness months. Domestic violence and breast cancer are not new issues and many people are aware of them. But, they continue to affect women at high rates. The effects on rural women can be ever greater as women often face more isolation, more silence, and fewer resources.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is celebrated to remind people of crime that often remains hidden, to highlight community resources, to recognize those working on the front lines, and to share opportunities for everyone to get involved.

Awareness months may have started to spread knowledge; now they provide an opportunity to reflect on action, change, and prevention. As rates of domestic violence go down, as breast cancer is identified earlier, rural women's well-being will improve. It starts recognizing both challenges and successes, working across agencies, and involving women themselves. A coordinated sustained effort drawing on the strengths of the community will go far in achieving the vision of the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence: living in a world where there is equality, safety, justice and peace for all.

Linking domestic violence and health

More than a decade ago, the American Public Health Association issued a position paper to mobilize public health professionals and agencies to engage in actions to prevent domestic violence. However, routine screening and intervention for DV in most health care setting and health departments has been isolated and limited.

Domestic violence is a health care issue. Most women visit providers for routine care, and DV victims also see providers for treatment of their injuries. Health care providers are in a unique position to help if they know how to detect domestic violence and provide victims

with referrals and support.

Beyond the physical trauma, DV is correlated with health risk behaviors and as such, DV is risk factor for chronic health problems. DV is associated with 8 of the 10 *Healthy People 2010* indicators including: tobacco use, substance abuse, injury and violence, mental health, responsible sexual behavior, health care access, immunization, and obesity.

Domestic violence often remains hidden in a health care system focused on treatment than addressing underlying risk factors. Now is the time for health

departments, policy makers, professionals, schools, and agencies to join the leadership of DV coalitions, advocates, and other organizations working on DV. Finding allies and forming support networks combined with listening to survivors and asking them what they need will go far to create community climates that do not tolerate domestic violence.

Adapted from Family Violence Prevention Fund. Health materials and free downloads, including "Making the Connection: Domestic Violence and Public Health" available from www.endabuse.org/health.





A Call to Action for Public Health

The CDC has identified 10 essential services for the practice of public health. These services can be applied to domestic violence to define opportunities and roles for public health:

- Collect data on the prevalence and health effects of DV
- Inform, educate, and empower communities about DV
- Mobilize community partnerships to address DV
- Promote policies and plans on DV
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect and ensure safety of victims and their children.
- Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based DV services
- Conduct research for new insights and innovative programs to address DV

Adapted from the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Supporting Awareness & Prevention

Domestic violence continues to invade the public and private lives of women, men, and children, impacting families, friends, co-workers, and communities. These behaviors—whether physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological—continue to occur in all homes regardless of education, income-level, or geography.

Domestic violence is not only a personal tragedy, it is a serious crime that negatively affects women,

men, children, neighborhoods and communities. We must join together to address the causes of this crime so that each and every home can be a place of peace and safety.

(From the DOJ Office on Violence Against Women www.usdoj.gov/ovw)

Many communities in Arizona have Domestic Violence Task Forces. Check with your local DV services agency to see what is available in your area and how you could get involved. (A list can be found at this

site: <http://www.aardvarc.org/dv/states/azdv.shtml> and other site linked in the resource section on page 4). The box to the left has ideas for how people in health fields can address domestic violence in their work.

The Rural Assistance Center has a variety of resources on domestic violence including information about issues in rural areas, tools, funding opportunities, forms, and organizations: www.raconline.org/info_guides/public_health/domesticviolence.php

Experiences of Immigrant Victims

Battered immigrant women face the unique double burden of being an immigrant and a victim of domestic and/or sexual violence. The Violence Against Women Act includes provisions to provide support to battered immigrant women to leave harmful or lethal situations without jeopardizing their immigration status.

In order to better understand women's experiences in applying for immigration status through the VAWA self-petition process, the Southern Arizona Battered Immigrant Women Project conducted interviews in three border counties with a number of applicants. Their stories

highlight the burdens and needs of women going through the process.

The mission of the BIWP is: safety and empowerment for immigrant women and children victims of sexual and domestic violence. The goal of the project is to improve the access to culturally appropriate services for battered immigrant women, thereby ensuring their rights under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Common Misconceptions about Non-Citizens

1. "Non-citizens have no rights" In Fact: Non-citizen victims of crime have the same rights to protection as citizen victims of crime

2. "Non-citizens have no reason to fear calling the police or appearing in court" In Fact: Non-citizens are often very afraid of any authority and usually hesitate to report crimes or appear in court

3. "Non-citizens have the same barriers and options as citizens" In Fact: Immigrants can have limited options and have unique barriers. These barriers can include: fear of being separated from children, mistrust of police and judicial system, misinformation, language, few knowledgeable service providers, and the current anti-immigrant climate.

Get Involved

For more information on the Southern Arizona Battered Immigrant Women Project or to join this initiative call Albert Crespo, Program Administrator, Governor's Division for Women, 602-542-1705, acrespo@az.gov Or contact your local Coordinator:

- Pima County: Montserrat Caballero 520.434.0195 mcaballero@sacasa.org
- Cochise County: Erin Maxwell 520.458.9096 erinm@ccs-seaz.org
- Santa Cruz County: Dora Taddey 520.604.6468 dtadd7@aol.com
- Pinal County: Tammy

McCarville 520.466.0921 tmccarville@pinalhispaniccouncil.org

- Graham/Greenlee Counties: Sherry Morano 928.348.9104 mgsbiw@cableone.net
- Yuma County: Aster Garcia, 928.373.0849 emamberly@adelphia.net

Breast Cancer: facts and prevention

October is also National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to nbcam.com, since the program began in 1985, mammography rates have more than doubled for women age 50 and older and breast cancer deaths have declined.

The Well Woman HealthCheck Program is a state-wide program that provides free cancer screening to women that qualify. Women on the program may receive a clinical breast exam, mammogram, pelvic exam, and pap test.

Facts about breast cancer

- All women are at some risk of getting breast cancer. In fact, being a woman and getting older are the biggest risk factors.
- Finding breast cancer early gives you more treatment options. It also improves the chances of successful treatment.

Incidence and Mortality:

- In Arizona, breast cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death and most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.
- Since 2000, breast cancer incidence and mortality rates in Arizona and the US have slowly decreased.
- in the US. In Arizona, 3,220 new cases and 710 deaths are estimated for 2007.

- A woman's life expectancy from birth is 80.4 years. In Arizona, most breast cancer cases are diagnosed in women between 55-74 years of age.
- Approximately 1 in 8 women in the US will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime.
- In Arizona, White women have the highest incidence rates, but African-American women have the highest mortality rates compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

Survival:

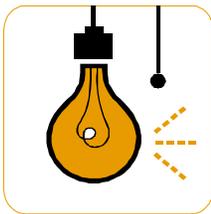
- The 5-year survival rates for various stages of breast cancer are 98.0% for localized; 83.5% for regional; 26.7% for distant and 56.9% for unstaged or unknown. Early detection of breast cancer saves lives!
- At least 38% of breast cancers in Hispanic, American Indian and African-American women are diagnosed at regional or distant stages whereas at least 61% of breast cancers are detected at local stages in the Asian and White, non-Hispanic populations.

Adapted from the Well Woman HealthCheck Breast Cancer Fact Sheet.

More information about the program, in English and in Spanish:

<http://www.wellwomanhealthcheck.org/index.htm>

Assessing Rural Women's Health Literacy



Another major activity of the AzRWHI is to learn more about the health literacy and health information seeking behaviors of women living in rural Arizona.

Women often make health care decisions for not only themselves, but also their immediate and extended families. It is critical to learn more about this area in order to develop programs and support systems for women that are responsive to their needs as individuals and as caregivers.

AzRWHI is currently conducting surveys in rural communities to collect information on the scope of this issue. If your community would be interested in participating in the survey project, please contact Jennifer Peters, petersj@u.arizona.edu.

Healthy Women Build Healthy Communities Toolkit – Free Resource

The Rural Health Office has copies of *Bright Futures for Women's Health and Wellness* available. It is part of an initiative of the

USDHHS HRSA Office of Women's Health.

The toolkit is designed to help women take action to build healthier communities through planning a one-time or ongoing community activity focused on physical activity and healthy eating.

Materials on physical activity and healthy eating are the initial focus to help young and adult women lead healthy lives and prevent chronic illness.

If your organization would like a hard copy, please contact Katie Gillespie, kag@email.arizona.edu. The Community Tool Kit also can be downloaded from: <http://www.hrsa.gov/WomensHealth/mybrightfuture/menu.html>.

Add to Favorites: Resources

Arizona Resources

➤ Rural Health Office list of domestic and sexual violence resources:

www.rho.arizona.edu/programs/azrwhi/resources/SDVresources.aspx

➤ Violence against women community forum reports

Reports from the 2006 Southern and Northern Arizona Forums on Rural Health.

www.rho.arizona.edu/programs/azrwhi/azrwhi_vawforum.ms.aspx

➤ Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Mission: To lead, to advocate, to educate, to collaborate, to end domestic violence in Arizona. Information, resources, trainings, and a legal advocacy hotline
<http://www.azcadv.org/>

➤ AZ Crime Victims Services

The mission of the Arizona Department of Public Safety's Crime Victim Services Unit is to effectively administer Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Assistance funds by ensuring appropriate and accessible services are available to crime victims, enhancing the delivery of those services through technical assistance, training opportunities, and promoting a continuum of care for every victim in every community.

<http://www.azvictims.com/domestic/services.asp>

National Resources

➤ Sacred Circle, National Resource Center To End Violence Against Native Women

is a project of Cangleska, Inc., a nonprofit, tribally chartered organization located within

the boundaries of the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. It provides technical assistance, policy development, training, materials and resource information regarding violence against Native women and to develop tribal strategies and responses to end violence.
<http://www.sacred-circle.com/>

➤ The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza)

is part of a national effort to address the domestic violence needs and concerns of under-served populations. A variety of resources, including publications and materials are available.
www.dvalianza.org



Upcoming Health Events

October 20, 2007

Well Woman Health Fair
Kingman Regional Medical Center, 10am to 2pm
Kingman AZ. More info: 928-757-0664

October 20, 2007

Invaluable Medical Assistant Seminar
Women's Health: Improving the Quality of Life
Phoenix College, Phoenix, AZ
http://www.aachc.org/events/f_events.php?event_id=142

October 30-31, 2007

Skills for the 21st Century
2007 Annual Conference, Phoenix AZ. Call AzCADV for registration. (602-279-2900)
www.azcadv.org/PDFs/Conferencebrochure2007.pdf

November 10, 2007

Queen Creek Community Family Health Expo
9am to 2pm, Canyon State Academy, Queen Creek, AZ.
More info: 480-388-4746
www.pandevidadaz.org

December 14-18, 2007

The Sharing Experience – a 5 day interactive basic domestic violence training.
Phoenix AZ Sponsored by AzCADV..
<http://www.azcadv.org/PDFs/2007SharingExp.pdf>

If you would like to join the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative or get more information, please visit our website:

http://www.rho.arizona.edu/Programs/azrwhi/AzRWHI_Council.aspx

If you have any suggestions or comments, or if you would like to contribute an article about a program or event related to rural women's health, please contact:

Jennifer Peters
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or Katie Gillespie
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This issue will be archived at:
http://rho.arizona.edu/programs/azrwhi/azrwhi_newsletter.aspx

Health Matters for Rural Women:

The newsletter of the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative

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