



The Maryland State Medical Society

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OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

BALTIMORE, October 9, 2014 — Every October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is observed to bring attention to an issue that affects our community in a profound way. It is an opportunity for domestic violence organizations to connect with the community.

In 1998, the Maryland Health Care Coalition Against Domestic Violence was formed with the mission of educating both health care professionals and the public about the health consequences of domestic violence. Operating entirely through grant funding, for nearly fifteen years, the Maryland Health Care Coalition Against Domestic Violence has been providing educational opportunities about family violence to Maryland's health care professionals. MedChi, along with the Center For a Healthy Maryland, has supported the Maryland Health Care Coalition Against Domestic Violence since its founding.

According to the American Medical Association (AMA), violence in the home among family members has reached epidemic proportions. Family violence creates 100,000 days of hospitalization, 30,000 emergency room visits and 40,000 trips to the doctor's office each year. Domestic violence is cited as the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States, more common than automobile accidents, muggings and rapes combined.

In 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur each year among US women ages 18 and older, resulting in nearly 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths. The CDC further found that 324,000 women each year experienced intimate partner violence during their pregnancy. Other published research has found that homicide, usually by an intimate partner, is one of the leading causes of death in pregnancy. The CDC also noted that 44 percent of women murdered by their intimate partner had visited an emergency department within two years of the homicide, 93 percent of whom had at least one injury visit.

Dr. Tyler Cymet, President of MedChi, wants people to know that domestic violence can be prevented. Dr. Cymet states "In order to help prevent domestic violence, we must provide assistance and support that meets the immediate needs of victims. Many victims can find it difficult to protect themselves and their children. They require safe shelter and housing, medical care, access to justice, and economic support."

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.