

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 00-149

Establishing a Policy to Increase the Safety, Well Being, and Stability of All Members of Families, Especially Women and Children, in Multnomah County and to Reduce Domestic Violence

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Domestic violence is emotional, physical, psychological abuse or neglect, sexual abuse, or threats thereof, perpetrated against a person by an intimate partner or household member. Intimate partner or household member includes a parent, child, spouse, former spouse, partner, former partner,* adult relative, or the other parent of a minor child. Although the most common form of domestic violence is intimate partner violence, violence between other family members is included in this definition. For example, the definition includes abuse between adult or adolescent children and their older parents or grandparents, between other family members living in the same household or others with significant household responsibilities. This definition excludes abuse by staff at institutions and child abuse by adult caretakers.
- b. Abuse may include threats, harm, injury, harassment, exertion of power and control over another person, terrorism, or damage to other people, animals or property. Domestic violence may be a single incident, and may range in intensity from harassment to homicide. Most often it is a systematic pattern of abuse that frequently escalates over time in frequency and severity. The pattern of abuse may include both criminal and non-criminal behavior and may or may not result in physical injury.
- c. Domestic violence is a pervasive and serious problem in Multnomah County. Our recent study found that one in seven adult women were assaulted either physically or sexually by their partner in 1999. Fifteen percent of children witnessed domestic violence; most were under 5 years old. Young women, 18 to 24 are particularly at risk of assault by their young male partners. Although national research has shown that women are more likely to be victims of abuse, especially intimate partner abuse, men can also be abused.
- d. The County recognizes that:
 - All people should be able to live and work free from domestic violence or the threat of violence;
 - Efforts to address the issues of domestic violence must be culturally appropriate, based in respect and dignity for all individuals and desire to build a rich multicultural community;
 - Cooperation and coordination among public and private resources and across Departments are essential to effectively address domestic violence;
 - Government is responsible for enacting and enforcing laws and policies which protect the rights and safety of victims of violence, funding appropriate services for victims and intervening with and holding batterers accountable;

* Partners may also include people who have dated each other or lived together in a sexual relationship, had a prior sexual relationship, or a gay or lesbian relationship. This includes teen dating partners.

- Social attitudes and structures and cultural norms that allow or encourage domestic violence to occur, including those that impact the status of women, need to be changed in order to prevent domestic violence.
- e. Victims turn to a wide variety of resources for support and assistance. Most frequently, they talk with family and friends, co-workers or supervisors, the police and social services, including mental health and domestic violence victim services. Thus, it is important that all parts of our County respond appropriately and find ways to increase the safety of victims and their children.
- f. Some County Departments already play a significant role in the primary domestic violence intervention system. These include the District Attorney's Office (prosecution), Community Justice (probation supervision), Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (restraining order service, law enforcement and corrections), Aging and Disability Services (adult protective services) and Community and Family Services (contracting for domestic violence victim services). Other Departments and staff have initiated projects to address the needs of their clients who are victims or batterers. Examples include:
- Screening of clients or patients and intervention (DCFS, Health);
 - Epidemiological studies on the prevalence of domestic violence (Health);
 - Analysis of the criminal justice system response (Local Public Safety Coordinating Council);
 - Development of:
 - guidelines for alcohol and drug treatment providers and for Family Court mediators in responding to domestic violence (DCJ, DCFS);
 - tools and training for managers and supervisors (DCFS and DSS);
 - intervention strategies for adolescent offenders (DCJ);
 - peer support and human resource policies (DSS); and
 - a County Domestic Violence Resource Manual (DCFS).
- g. Domestic violence intervention and prevention stretch across many disciplines, philosophies and agencies. It is a social justice and human rights issue, a criminal justice and public health issue. It has a profound impact on victims' physical and mental health and a significant impact on the workplace.
- h. It is necessary that the entire community, not just government, the criminal justice system or social services, address this problem. Community organizations such as schools, churches, youth organizations, civic and social groups have opportunities to assist victims and provide intervention and strong messages to the perpetrators that domestic violence is inappropriate.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. The County will develop effective and integrated responses to domestic violence as:
 - a) an employer, by the development and implementation of procedures to increase the safety of all employees. These procedures should address employees who are victims of domestic violence and their co-workers who are endangered. They also should assist in holding perpetrators of domestic violence accountable;

b) a provider and contractor of services to County residents, by the development and implementation of appropriate screening, intervention, awareness and prevention protocols and tools for the direct services provided or contracted by the County; and

c) a leader in the community, by working with community organizations to enhance a community-wide response to domestic violence. The Board has identified several areas of particular importance:

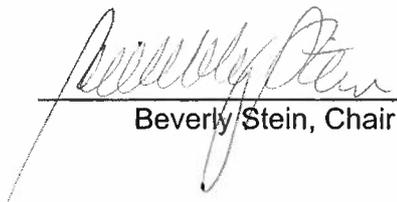
- Increasing funding for domestic violence services;
- Partnering with schools and colleges to develop prevention and intervention strategies for young men and women; and with the business community to assure safety of employees;
- Bringing key players in public and private efforts to end domestic violence to the table and provide opportunities for them to build productive relationships; and
- Promoting awareness of domestic violence and effective intervention and or prevention strategies.

2. The Board, acting through the Chair, directs the Domestic Violence Coordinator to work with the Board and Department Directors, Managers and their designees to develop these responses with an emphasis on intervention.

ADOPTED this 7th day of September, 2000.

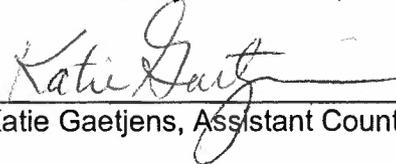


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Beverly Stein, Chair

REVIEWED:

THOMAS SPONSLER, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
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