



*Thank You!* 🌿

We would like to thank all the past and current members of the State Prevention Team that assisted in the development, review and finalization of the State Prevention Plan. Their input, dedication and insight are greatly appreciated!



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**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

North Dakota Department of Health  
Division on Injury Prevention and Control

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*Prevention Starts Here:*

## North Dakota's Plan for a Future Free of Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH



This plan was made possible through the cooperative agreements with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the North Dakota Department of Health: U17/CE824955 (EMPOWER); 5VF1/CE001113 (RPE); and the North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault in North Dakota: US4/CE822581 (DELTA).

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*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

- Margaret Mead



*Be the change you wish to see in the world.*

-Mahatma Gahndi



*It's about moving upstream...*

One day, a fisherman was fishing from a river bank when he saw someone being swept downstream, struggling to keep their head above water. The fisherman jumped in, grabbed the person, and helped them to shore. The survivor thanked the fisherman and left, and the hero dried himself off and continued fishing. Soon he heard another cry for help and saw someone else being swept downstream. He immediately jumped into the river again and saved that person as well. This scenario continued all afternoon. As soon as the fisherman returned to fishing, he would hear another cry for help and would wade in to rescue another wet and drowning person. Finally, the fisherman said to himself, "I can't go on like this. I'd better go upstream and find out what is happening."

This public health analogy of moving upstream to prevent a problem exemplifies the work of the State Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Prevention Team. We are looking for solutions in an effort to "move upstream" to prevent intimate partner and sexual violence in our state before it starts.

*Mission:*

Working together to create a community free of intimate partner and sexual violence in North Dakota.

*Vision Statement:*

All citizens have the right to live in a community free from intimate partner and sexual violence.

*Sponsors:*

North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault in North Dakota

North Dakota Department of Health Division of Injury Prevention and Control

*Fellow North Dakotans:*

The North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault, in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Injury Prevention and Control and the North Dakota Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence State Prevention Team, are pleased to present the Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Prevention Plan.

Intimate partner violence and sexual violence affects every one of us. In a recent survey administered to North Dakotans, nearly 70% of respondents acknowledged that sexual violence was occurring in their community and 61% agreed that it was possible to prevent it. Prevention is possible. Most North Dakotans agree.

We would like to thank the individuals and organizations who dedicated their time and expertise to developing the plan. But we are only just beginning. We invite you to become involved in helping us implement the plan. It will take all of us working together to accomplish our vision of one day ending intimate partner and sexual violence.

Janelle Moos  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services/  
Coalition Against Sexual Assault in North Dakota

*Dear Stakeholder:*

Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence are a significant public health concern in North Dakota. In 2008, 4,258 new victims of intimate partner violence received services from crisis intervention centers in North Dakota. In the same year, 854 primary victims of sexual assault also sought out crisis services. In a response to these issues, the State Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Prevention Team has put together a state plan for prevention.

This plan was developed through a partnership with the North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault in North Dakota, the North Dakota Department of Health's Division of Injury Prevention and Control and the University Of North Dakota's Center for Rural Health. These partners, together with stakeholders from a multidisciplinary background across the state, came together to create a plan that is grounded in primary prevention.

This plan serves as a guide for state and local leaders as we continue to improve our efforts in prevention of intimate partner and sexual violence. I hope you will join with partners across the state in addressing this important problem of preventing violence.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Dwelle, MD, MPHMT  
State Health Officer

## What is the State Plan?

The State Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Prevention Plan (The State Plan) provides North Dakota with a comprehensive framework to prevent first time incidents of intimate partner and sexual violence by targeting leadership, data, and evidence based programming. By targeting these three areas, it is our hope that we can begin to work together to create communities free of intimate partner and sexual violence.

## What is the State Prevention Team?

The first meeting of the Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence State Prevention Team was held in May 2006. The mission and goals of the State Prevention Team have evolved over time with the changes in the primary prevention programs at the national level. There are approximately 40 members on the team. Members come from a multitude of professional backgrounds, including state government, advocacy agencies, batterer's treatment, social services and tribal entities. Team membership has evolved over the years although a core group of individuals remain committed to the process.

The State Prevention Team came together to create the State Plan based upon the results of a statewide needs and resources assessment. Goals for the plan and State Prevention Team Committees were created in response to the needs and resources assessment.

*Violence is not an insurmountable problem. It can be prevented using a thoughtful and systematic approach.*

- Dr. Rodney Hammond (Director, Division of Violence Prevention, U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## Problem Statement/ Background/Magnitude:

- In 2009, 4,874 incidents of intimate partner violence were reported to crisis centers in North Dakota.
- At least 5,222 children were directly impacted by these incidents.
- In 2009, 830 primary victims of sexual assault were served by crisis centers in North Dakota.
- Intimate partner and sexual violence are preventable public health issues. Through the use of PRIMARY PREVENTION we can stop these incidents before they start.
- Primary prevention activities are those directed at the general population, or a subset of the general population, designed to actively promote healthy, non-violent relationships. In other words, primary prevention seeks to reduce the overall likelihood that anyone will become a victim or a perpetrator by creating conditions that make violence less likely to ever occur.

## Conditions in North Dakota that Merit Addressing

- **A Rural State-** North Dakota's rural nature presents a number of unique challenges in the area of intimate partner and sexual violence. Rural victims face many barriers to receiving services when escaping violent situations.
- **Energy Development-** While much of the nation has been experiencing a severe economic downturn, North Dakota's economy has remained relatively steady partly due to booming development in the energy sector. This development has not come without a price, as the western half of the state struggles to keep up with large influxes of new residents and suffers from housing shortages. It is a known fact that intimate partner and sexual violence victims are often trapped by conditions such as a lack of access to housing.
- **American Indian Population-** North Dakota's four tribal nations include The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, The Mandan Hidatsa and Arikara Nation and The Spirit Lake Nation. Our state also includes one Indian Service Agency at Trenton. In all, American Indians comprise 5% of the population in the state. Crime victimization rates in the American Indian community are significantly higher than in the general U.S. population. As a result of these high rates of violence, American Indian women are at a high risk of experiencing intimate partner and sexual violence.





## Vision of Success:

### Goals of the State Prevention Plan

#### Increased effectiveness and sustainability of the North Dakota Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence State Prevention Team.

Why we selected this goal:

The effectiveness and sustainability of the State Prevention Team are critical to the long-term success of the project. This goal will provide the foundation for the project to move forward into implementation of the Prevention Plan. Research has shown that strong leadership is an integral component to the success and stability of any project.

#### Increased accuracy and availability of data in North Dakota regarding intimate partner and sexual violence for planning and evaluation.

Why we selected this goal:

Through the process of conducting the statewide and local community needs assessments, the lack of reliable and valid data emerged as a dilemma. Particularly lacking is data regarding perpetration and perpetrators, what protective factors are important for preventing intimate partner and sexual violence, and data regarding specific groups, including, but not limited to, American Indians and the LGBTQI community.

#### Increased use of evidence supported and evidence based strategies to prevention intimate partner and sexual violence in North Dakota.

Why we selected this goal:

Communities in North Dakota are poised to implement intimate partner and sexual violence prevention programs. Local Prevention Teams have identified target populations and strategies and activities for both capacity building and the chosen population in their prevention plans. It is the vision of the State Prevention Team that as many communities as possible will use evidence supported strategies in their communities.

#### Increased norms and behaviors that prevent intimate partner and sexual violence in North Dakota.

Why we selected this goal:

Community beliefs about violence are at the core of the theoretical basis of what contributes to and perpetuates violence in our society. In order to counteract these social norms to create communities where violence is unacceptable, a variety of efforts need to be implemented at the state and local level.

## Using the State Plan:

The extensive needs and resource assessment conducted as part of the plan helped to identify a range of issues. The State Plan establishes a framework for specific goals related to intimate partner and sexual violence prevention. Due to the comprehensive nature of the plan, no assumptions are made that one agency or organization will be responsible for addressing the goals of the plan. Instead, the plan holds many opportunities for involvement from community groups, individuals, institutions and organizations to become involved. The impact of our plan and message will be much more significant when we collaborate.

Everyone has a role and we invite you to identify where your contribution to a safe and violence free North Dakota can be made.

### As an individual you can.....

- Become informed about the current pandemic of sexual and intimate partner violence.
- Stop tolerating language, actions, and norms that support sexual and intimate partner violence.
- Learn to notice and find ways to safely take action when you see sexism or abuse.
- Support or volunteer at agencies in your community that work to provide awareness, advocacy, and prevention education and learn how you can take this critical information to other venues to maximize the impact of this plan.
- Reach out to local prevention partners who can help you infuse prevention into your current work.
- Join the efforts of your local or state prevention team.

### As a member or leader of a community or organization you can.....

- Call on your members and find ways organizationally to be involved with local prevention efforts including representation on local and state prevention teams.
- Train your staff and membership on prevention of sexual and intimate partner violence.
- Attend local events and respond to calls for action from local, state and national programs.
- Encourage your staff to engage in healthy, respectful and peaceful relationships both on and off the job.
- Consider implementing policies that promote respectful relationships and work environments.

**As you see yourself in the list above we ask you to take the next step!**

*Primary prevention is the next stage in the work to end intimate partner and sexual violence. I encourage everyone to join efforts in the prevention of intimate partner and sexual violence.*

– North Dakota Governor John Hoeven