



PROJECT CONNECT DELAWARE

A partnership between the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Division of Public Health, Planned Parenthood of Delaware, La Red, Peoples' Place, Child, Inc., and the University of Delaware.



Project Connect

A Coordinated Public Health Initiative to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Women

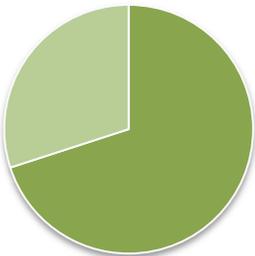
Funded by the Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

The mission of *Project Connect* is to improve health outcomes of Delawareans at risk for domestic and sexual violence and coercion by strengthening partnerships and developing sustainable policies and practices in both reproductive/sexual health settings and domestic/sexual violence programs. In the clinical setting, *Project Connect* utilizes a brochure-based intervention to promote universal healthy relationships education, assess for violence/coercion, offer harm reduction strategies and provide a “warm” or supported referral to community-based domestic and/or sexual violence programs.

Why is Project Connect important to promoting the health and well-being of Delawareans?

Intimate Partner Violence Costs the U.S. over \$8.3 Billion Annually

■ Healthcare Costs ■ Lost Productivity



*The increased annual health care costs for victims of IPV can persist as much as 15 years after the cessation of abuse

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Retrieved on Apr. 5, 2014 from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html>

Delaware’s Project Connect program is essential to support roll out of the ACA. New provisions in the ACA are expected to increase dramatically the number of health providers who are screening patients and providing counseling for domestic violence. Training, coordination and access to services are essential if we are to realize the full promise of the Violence Against Women Act. Even more, leading health organizations, like the U.S Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of OB/GYNs specifically refer to *Project Connect* as a recommended evidence-based model.

Everyone deserves an opportunity for optimal health. And everyone deserves to feel safe in their relationships. However, the number of Delawareans who have experienced severe intimate partner violence (IPV) is greater than the populations of Wilmington, Dover, Milford, Georgetown and Seaford combined. (Source: CDC NISVS Survey, 2010). This means the equivalent of entire cities of Delawareans are now also at risk for other health problems as a result of their abuse, such as depression, heart disease, substance abuse, STIs, HIV/AIDS,

unintended and teen pregnancies, diabetes, asthma and obesity.

If healthcare providers are not providing universal education and using evidence-based and recommended models to consistently screen and assess patients for domestic/sexual violence and refer patients to community-based programs, we may be missing an important but hidden contributor to Delaware’s skyrocketing STI rates, teen and unintended pregnancy rates, and negative health outcomes associated with the immediate and life-long impact of trauma/abuse.

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What have we done and what impact have we observed?

- Distributed over 50,000 educational cards and trained over 1,000 providers and advocates on Project Connect
- All DV shelter programs statewide have increased health resources and changed practices to better address reproductive health in safety planning with victims. All clients entering shelter receive verbal and written information on contraception, STIs, and reproductive coercion (RC), and are informed about birth control, pregnancy tests and emergency contraception available in shelter. RC is part of hotline training for DV program staff and RC screening questions have been formalized in shelter intake procedures.
- Staff, including *Promotoras* and Healthcare Ambassadors, at all 5 pilot clinics at Planned Parenthood and La Red Health Center, are trained and implementing the intervention. Changes to clinical policy and practice, including new EHR prompts, and provisions for booster and new staff trainings have been made.
- Clinics and DV programs have forged partnerships and provided 9 on-site cross-trainings to each other
- All Delaware Title X Family Planning Affiliates have received training.
- All Division of Public Health Southern Health Services clinics are implementing the project as of July 1, 2014
- Presented at Medical Grand Rounds for Christiana Care Health System, a network of private, non-profit hospitals providing services to Delaware and portions of 7 counties bordering the state in PA, MD, and NJ.
- 2014 Office of Women’s Health End of Year Banquet highlighted Project Connect and Domestic Violence
- In partnership with Art Fusion, developed an audience-interactive theatrical workshop focused on dynamics of reproductive coercion performed at Project Connect trainings and events across the state by actors who are multi-cultural and bi-lingual. This is believed to be the first theatrical skit of its kind across the country.
- Trainings have also been provided to adolescent health programs, including many of Delaware’s School-based Wellness Centers, on using the teen patient safety cards.
- The Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council has helped extend the project’s messaging to women who are homeless, near-homeless, and incarcerated. For example, patient safety cards are provided during workshops at the Baylor Women's Correctional Institution, the only women’s prison in the state.
- Planned Parenthood of Delaware developed and presented a training workshop for sex educators on RC and IPV at the 2014 National Sex Education Conference

”As the state director for Public Health, I want to be clear: domestic violence is a public health issue as much as newborn screenings, immunizations, healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and safe drinking water.”
 - *Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director,*

TODAY’S REALITY	TOMORROW’S VISION
Few health care providers report screening and assessing for intimate partner violence (IPV). ¹	Delaware health care providers have standards of practice for IPV prevention, screening, assessment, and referral. Information about healthy relationships is a routine part of preventative medical care.
Delaware’s Project Connect represents the first dedicated funding to support a statewide partnership between public health and domestic violence organizations to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence in clinical settings.	Funding for Delaware’s Project Connect is sustained and expanded to support full statewide implementation in both public and private clinical settings. Significant impacts are realized in Delaware’s healthcare savings and worker productivity. IPV prevalence decreases, as well as rates of teen and unintended pregnancy, STI/HIV, and other conditions related to IPV victimization, including a reduction in adverse childhood experiences from children witnessing IPV.
When Delawareans organize to address IPV, they primarily work with criminal justice or crisis workers to help raise awareness of the problem and provide information and resources.	Delawareans better understand IPV as a preventable health problem, working together with health care, public health, and IPV/SV programs to help reduce risk and promote prevention. Initiatives promoting health/well-being are not limited to physical activity, nutrition and traditional health screenings, but now include universal education on healthy relationships and IPV/SV screening. A “Health in all Policies” approach includes IPV/SV prevention.