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## Building Partnerships to Address the Link Between Domestic Violence & Health

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**The Domestic Violence and Health Care Partnerships (DVHCP)** initiative is a statewide project funded by Blue Shield of California Foundation to improve access to domestic violence and primary care health services, strengthen domestic violence prevention and response within health systems, and increase overall capacity to meet the health needs of survivors.

The impact of domestic violence on health is well documented. And doctors are among the people who Californians trust most to assist survivors.

- Healthcare utilization costs for victims of domestic violence are 20% higher than for those not impacted.
- The medical cost-burden in the US from domestic violence in the year after victimization is as much as \$7 billion.

Domestic violence service providers routinely see clients with unmet health needs, but have difficulty getting timely care from providers with the appropriate training and background. The Affordable Care Act's prevention guidelines for women's health include domestic violence screening, counseling, and referrals but few physicians have the training and relationships to implement these practices effectively.

In 2015, Blue Shield of California Foundation supported the creation of 19 new partnerships statewide between domestic violence service providers and health care providers, most of which were clinics.

**Health care costs for victims of domestic violence are 20% higher than the general population.**

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine recently completed an evaluation of these domestic violence and health care partnerships. Key findings include:

- **Health care providers are more likely to screen for domestic violence.**  
Health care providers doubled their rate of assessment for domestic violence during their patient encounters.
- **Patients are more likely to report domestic violence in health settings.**  
Among patients with prior exposure to unhealthy relationships, more than 1 in 3 were willing to share that information with their healthcare provider (compared with previous rates of fewer than 1 in 10).
- **Survivors are more likely to focus on their health needs.**  
82% of survivors reported an increased understanding of the effects of domestic violence on their personal health after being seen at a partner health care organization.
- **Domestic violence and health care providers are more likely to refer to each other.**  
Both advocates and healthcare providers reported significant increases in their confidence in making referrals to their partner agency.

Partner organizations are now addressing sustainability to see how their insights and practices can be disseminated and how similar partnerships can be replicated on a wider scale. Project outcomes and partnership accomplishments were highlighted at the Futures Without Violence bi-annual Domestic Violence and Health Care Summit in Fall 2017.

For more information on domestic violence and health care partnerships, please contact Senior Program Officer Lucia Corral Peña,  
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