



Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

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January 14, 2009

Darlene Johnson
 Program Director
 Office on Violence Against Women/USDOJ
 810 Seventh Street, NW
 Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Nineteen percent of Connecticut adults are survivors of sexual assault and fourteen percent of residents reported being victims of childhood sexual abuse (ORC Macro, 2000). The Macro report also revealed that most respondents (56%) were not familiar with sexual assault services offered in the community, and Hispanic respondents were the least likely segment to be aware of sexual assault programs. In addition, Latinos (as well as teens, college students, and the disabled) experience a high level of frustration when faced with a lack of culturally competent services.

The Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) is a statewide coalition whose nine member centers provide direct and indirect services to victims of sexual assault across the entire state. For nearly three decades, CONNSACS has been working to end sexual violence through victim assistance, community education, and public policy advocacy.

Last year, CONNSACS provided services to 4,166 victims, and VAWA funds allowed CONNSACS to address the needs of underserved populations through:

1. Maintaining a 24-hour statewide Spanish Response Service;
2. Providing bilingual/bicultural counseling, advocacy, and outreach services at six member centers in areas containing the state's largest Spanish-speaking populations;
3. Employing a Director of Policy & Advocacy, who assisted centers with efforts to ensure appropriate healthcare response to victims;
4. Employing a Community Relations Coordinator, who provided technical assistance and support to centers in reaching Spanish-speaking victims of sexual assault and continued outreach activities to a variety of underserved communities;
5. Assisting colleges and universities in improving services to victims and potential victims on campus;
6. Conducting public awareness efforts that included the distribution of a variety of brochures, posters, and giveaways (in English and Spanish) at health fairs and other community events;
7. Monitoring healthcare issues that affect women and working with the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign and the Evidence Commission to address the health and forensic evidence collection needs of sexual assault victims;
8. Assisting with training of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners; and
9. Providing a variety of trainings and technical assistance for the staff of member centers to enhance service delivery to victims.

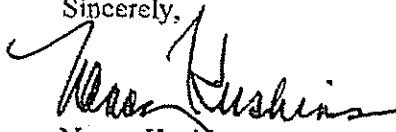
Currently, through the support of VAWA funds, CONNSACS is continuing to enhance services and outreach to underserved populations by:

- Maintaining and enhancing a coordinated, comprehensive, and culturally competent Statewide Spanish Response Service;
- Distributing linguistically appropriate and culturally competent information and outreach materials for underserved populations;
- Networking and building relationships with representative groups at both local and statewide levels to ensure appropriate, sensitive, and comprehensive services to victims of sexual assault and their families;
- Facilitating College Consortium activities and outreach efforts;
- Providing outreach to healthcare agencies regarding sexual assault issues;
- Networking and conducting outreach to communities of color, the disability community, the immigrant and refugee community, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) populations, and community-based groups who serve these populations; and
- Ongoing implementation of recommendations contained in CONNSACS' strategic plan.

By increasing awareness of and access to services as described above, CONNSACS expects to provide direct services to 4,500 victims of sexual assault this year including:

- 360 Spanish-speaking sexual assault victims, family members, and friends;
- 218 disabled sexual assault victims, family members, and friends;
- 500 youth, ages 12-18 years; and
- Sexual violence victims within Connecticut's university and college system.

Sincerely,



Nancy Kushins
Executive Director