

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

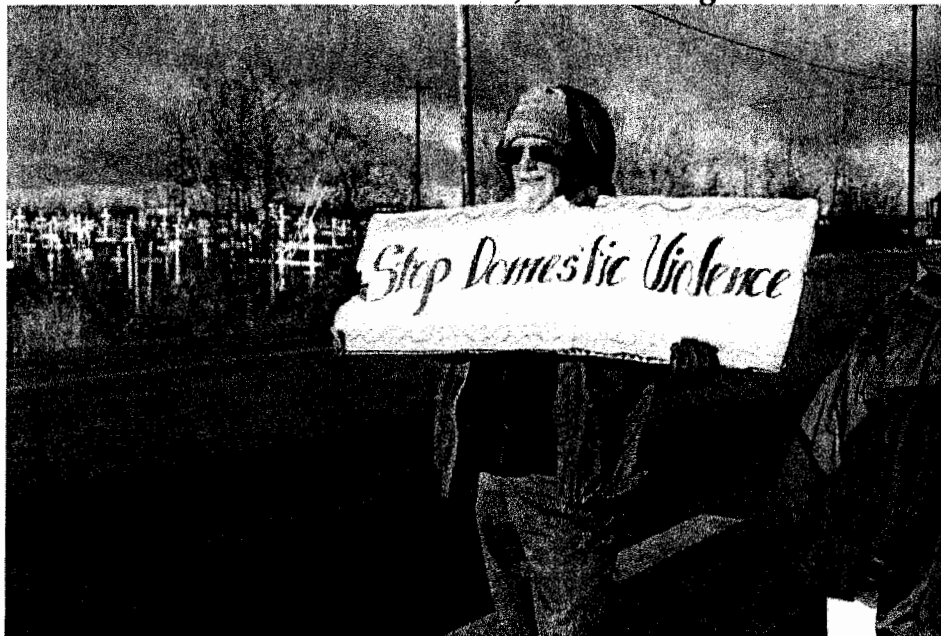


March 1, 2008

**Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Legislative Task Force**

Report to the Legislature

"That which we allow, we encourage."



**Bethel Peace Walk
Bethel, AK
October 5, 2007**

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Table of Contents

Members.....	3
Letter to the Legislature.....	4
Task Force Authority & Acronyms.....	6
Methodology.....	7
CDVSA and the Network.....	9
Findings and Recommendations.....	11
• Council's relationship and consultation with other state agencies.....	11
• Statutory responsibilities and priorities of the Council.....	13
• Appointment process for members of the Council.....	15
• Location of the Council within the state administrative structure.....	16
• Council's compliance with grant management requirements.....	17
• Council's mission, and the focus of the Council's mission on prevention.....	18
• Other issues.....	21
• Batterer's Intervention Program.....	23
Meeting Summaries.....	25
• Bethel, Alaska: October 4 th & 5 th , 2007.....	25
• Fairbanks, Alaska: December 13 th & 14 th , 2007.....	27
• Anchorage, Alaska: January 8 th & 9 th , 2008.....	29
• Juneau, Alaska: January 31 st – February 2 nd , 2008.....	31
Closing Remarks.....	33
Appendices.....	34
• HB 215.....	34
• Alaska State Statute 18.66.010.....	40
• CDVSA Meeting Minutes 9-4-07.....	42
• Letter from Legislative Budget & Audit Committee.....	48-49

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



CDVSA Legislative Task Force Members

Representative Anna Fairclough, Chair

Senator Con Bunde

Senator Kim Elton

Senator Donald Olson

Representative John Coghill

Representative Lindsey Holmes

Todd Brocious, Department of Education

Terri Campbell, Department of Education

John Glass, Department of Public Safety

Samuel Edwards, Department of Corrections

Stephen Wallace, Department of Law

William Hogan, Department of Health & Social Services

Leandra Ross, Urban Public Member

Yvonne Sarren, Rural Public Member

Chris Ashenbrenner, CDVSA – Ex officio

Peggy Brown, ANDVSA – Ex Officio

Task Force Aides

Renée Limoge, Staff to Representative Anna Fairclough

Karen Lidster, Staff to Representative John Coghill

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



March 1, 2008

Dear Members of the Legislature:

House Bill 215 established The Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (CDVSA) Legislative Task Force to examine recurring issues and questions that continue to arise during reauthorization of the CDVSA.

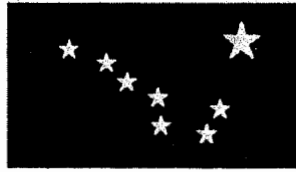
The recommendations contained in this report to the Legislature follow hours of public testimony in Bethel, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau, site visits to victim service providers in these cities, and hours of discussion among Task Force members.

The CDVSA Legislative Task Force recommendations summarized in the attached report directly address the six issues the legislature tasked our body to address. In addition, our travels throughout Alaska made evident a number of recurring themes and issues related to the associated problems of domestic violence and sexual assault which cannot be effectively addressed within the confines of the six legislatively enumerated areas of inquiry. Because we conclude that these other issues merit mention in this report, we have included an additional section for your review.

First, throughout all the public hearings and comment we have revealed a very significant truth: *that which we allow, we encourage.*

Second, domestic violence and sexual assault within Alaska occur with alarming frequency. The collateral costs to our State of this continuing problem are significant and quantifiable. Moreover, this epidemic presents a very real threat to the safety of Alaskans. Unfortunately, the problem does not readily lend itself to any single or easy solution. The causes are complex and flow from a myriad of factors including at a very foundational level how Alaskans view, tolerate, and permit interpersonal violence. One challenge exists in the diverse cultural make up of Alaskan society. Another challenge is presented by rural and urban populations and the difficulties presented in finding solutions that will work throughout the State. What may work in one area may not be a solution in another. Thus, it is apparent that a one-size fits all approach to the problem of domestic violence and sexual assault will not address the issue. Traditionally applied criminal justice solutions will not solve the problem. However, we conclude that raising individual public awareness and creating an environment of outspoken intolerance for acts of domestic violence and sexual assault is a necessary first step toward addressing

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



and ending this plague upon Alaska. For example, Alaskans need to recognize that shelter and victim service organizations are not anti-family or anti-man.

Instead, Alaskans need to recognize that shelters exist to deal with a very real problem by providing women, children, and men a safe place to escape violence. The societal shift, in and of itself, would represent a meaningful step toward a solution.

Third, although the Task Force was specifically formed to look at CDVSA, it is obvious that the number of State agencies tasked with addressing domestic violence and sexual assault far exceed the reach and responsibility of CDVSA. At present, CDVSA has an ambitious number of legislatively stated goals, generally designed to address four areas: prevention, intervention, crisis management, and accountability. CDVSA's current budget may not be enough to address each of these areas. Consequently, interests such as prevention and accountability of offenders go underfunded. Until prevention is brought to the forefront and adequate funding is made available, our State's response to domestic violence and sexual assault will remain reactive. Our report therefore includes recommendations designed to address solutions that may exist outside the purview of the CDVSA.

The Task Force agreed on one overarching recommendation from the outset: the Council needs to develop and implement a strategic plan. It is our hope that many of the recommendations found within this report will be considered when the Council embarks on that task. The Chair has sponsored legislation to extend the Council's sunset date in an effort to give CDVSA an opportunity to develop and implement a plan and have concrete results when they come before the Legislature for reauthorization in the future.

Other than HB 334 which is currently moving through the Legislature to extend the Council to 2014, our Task Force does not recommend bringing forth a legislative package in the current legislative session. However, we do believe that the recommendations contained in this report will result in changes to statute in future years.

The problems presented by domestic violence and sexual assault are complex. Solutions require change that must come from Alaska as a society. Individuals, families, and communities must all become involved until everyone is clear that domestic violence and sexual assault will not be tolerated. Our collective experience tells us that until such change is achieved, Alaska will have the shameful distinction of leading the nation in incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Respectfully submitted,

Members of the CDVSA Legislative Task Force

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Task Force Authority and Direction

The CDVSA Legislative Task Force was created by House Bill 215 to consider the following issues:

- the Council's relationship and consultation with other state agencies;
- the statutory responsibilities and priorities of the Council;
- the appointment process for members of the Council;
- the location of the Council within the state administrative structure;
- the Council's compliance with grant management requirements; and
- the Council's mission, and the focus of the Council's mission on prevention, intervention, crisis response, and perpetrator accountability.

These issues were identified based on findings in the 2001 and 2005 Legislative Audits of the Council, as well as anecdotal conversations in the Capitol in 2007 regarding challenges to the reauthorization of CDVSA.

Findings and recommendations on the above issues were to be submitted in a Report to the Legislature by March 1, 2008.

House Bill 215 is shown as Appendix 1.

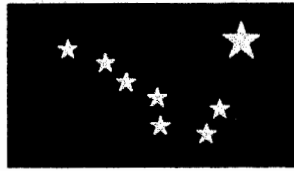
The statutes governing CDVSA, AS 18.66.010, are shown as Appendix 2.

Acronyms

AS – Alaska State Statutes
ANDVSA – Alaska Network on DV/SA
AWARE – Aiding Women in Abuse & Rape Emergencies
AWAIC – Abused Women's Aid In Crisis
BIP – Batterer's Intervention Programs
CDC – Center for Disease Control
CDVSA – Council for DV/SA
DOC – Department of Corrections
DPS – Department of Public Safety
DV – Domestic Violence
DV/SA – Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault
DHSS – Department of Health & Social Services
LIO – Legislative Information Office
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

Network - ANDVSA
OCS – Office of Children's Services
SA – Sexual Assault
SART – Sexual Assault Response Team
VAWA – Violence Against Women Act
VPSO – Village Public Safety Officer

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Methodology

House Bill 215, creating the CDVSA Legislative Task Force was signed into law by Governor Palin on September 28, 2007. Shortly following, the Task Force met via teleconference to select a chair, determine the rural community that would be visited and set a timeline to accomplish our goals. Representative Anna Fairclough was selected by her colleagues to chair the Task Force and it was decided that Bethel would be our rural location. Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau were designated meeting locations per HB 215. The Task Force determined they would hold public hearings and conduct site visits in each of these communities.

Following her selection as chair, Representative Fairclough generated a letter requesting input from current Council members and attended the Council's September 4, 2007 meeting in order to discuss with the board the Task Force's formation, purpose and plans for meetings throughout the state, culminating in a Report to the Legislature. Representative Fairclough personally requested their input at the meeting.

Meeting minutes are shown as Appendix 3.

In Bethel, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau, the Task Force made site visits to the local victim's service providers and others, scheduled public hearings and listened to several hours of public testimony.

Prior to our arrival in each community, we invited law enforcement, the court system, medical providers, native organizations, school districts, community leaders and other service providers to participate in the public hearing process or provide written comments.

In each community the Task Force visited local shelters. Site visits were also made to visit Anchorage's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Center, and also the Child Advocacy Center, Stevie's Place in Fairbanks.

At each public hearing we presented who we were, who the Council was and what issues we were seeking answers to. Additionally, in each community, a series of questions were placed before the public to consider in their comments:

1. What would your community like this Task Force to know about DV/SA within your community?
2. What community resources do you have? Who do you work with in your community?

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



3. What will it take to prevent DV/SA in your community? What is the responsibility of the community? Responsibility of the state?
4. What can the legislature do? New laws, enforce existing laws?
5. What didn't we ask that you want to tell us about?

In addition to articulating our mandate with regard to the Council the Task Force encouraged testimony about possible solutions to Alaska's domestic violence and sexual assault problems.

Additionally, the Task Force felt that it was important to have an opportunity to speak with the Legislative Auditor, Pat Davidson. A number of findings in Legislative Audits from 2001 and 2005 were recurring questions for members of the Legislature when reauthorization for CDVSA came before the body.

Finally, the Task Force had the opportunity to hear from Jayne Andreen, one of the longest serving Executive Directors of CDVSA. She engaged in useful dialog with the members, providing insight into some of the methodologies used by the Council, as well as answering questions about the Council's history. Ms. Andreen also reconfirmed item by item the recommendations that the Task Force has heard throughout Alaska.

As a group, the Task Force expressed their willingness to come back together to review any proposed strategic plan that the Council develops.

Through public testimony and lengthy internal discussions, the Task Force was able to develop findings and recommendations on each of the six points we were charged with addressing. Those findings and recommendations are contained in this report.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

Mission: The mission of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is to reduce the causes and incidence and to alleviate the effects of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Purpose: The Council, which is an administrative, policy-making body, is composed of three public members appointed by the Governor after consultation with the [Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault], and representatives from the Departments of Public Safety, Law, Education, and Health and Social Services. The purpose of the Council is to “provide for planning and coordination of services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and to perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide for crisis intervention and prevention programs” (AS 18.66.010).¹

The Council’s purpose, as defined in statute, reads: “There is established in the Department of Public Safety the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The purpose of the Council is to provide for planning and coordination of services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault or to their families and to perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide for crisis intervention and prevention programs.”²

The Council and the Network – What’s the Difference?

The *Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* (Network) is a statewide nonprofit organization that is a coalition to end violence against women. Created in 1978 by concerned women to address domestic violence in Alaska, it is now comprised of 19 domestic violence/sexual assault programs from across Alaska.

The Network worked closely with the Alaska Legislature in 1981 to establish the *Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* (Council) in the Alaska Department of Public Safety. The Network provides technical assistance, legal advocacy support, connections to pro-bono attorneys, training and resource materials to member programs, attorneys, community organizations and other stakeholders. The Network also works with state and federal policy makers on legislative and other policy issues affecting victims of violence.

¹ Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault website. <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/Cdvsa/>, February 5, 2008.

² AK 2007 Statutes, 18.66.010. February 7, 2008.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The Council is a State agency that coordinates the Alaska government response to domestic violence and sexual assault by coordinating services, gathering and disseminating data, and securing funding for services through federal and state sources. The Council provides funding and oversees funds to 21 victim service programs, funds 8 batterer intervention programs and certifies all 15 batterer intervention programs in Alaska.

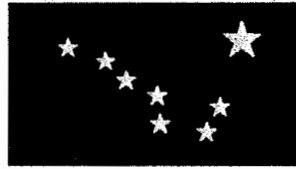
The seven-member Council includes representatives from the Departments of Law, Public Safety, Education & Early Development, and Health & Social Services. Additionally, three public members are appointed by the Governor to two-year terms who oversee activities of the Council. The Network is authorized by Alaska statute to recommend to the Governor applicants for the Council's public seats.

The Network and the Council have worked cooperatively together since 1981 to ensure a comprehensive response to the crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Coordinated activities include:

- Co-sponsoring statewide training, conferences and media campaigns
- Providing resource materials
- Advancing legislation to promote victim safety and hold offenders of domestic violence and sexual assault accountable for their actions

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



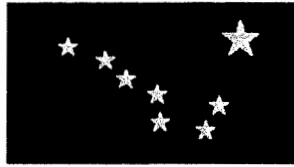
The Council's relationship and consultation with other state agencies.

Findings:

- AS 18.66.050 (4) states that the Council shall “coordinate services provided by the Department of Law, the Department of Education and Early Development, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Health and Social Services, and other state agencies and community groups dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault, and crisis intervention and prevention, and provide technical assistance as requested by those state agencies and community groups.”
- Despite AS 18.66.050 the Council has no authority to mandate the actions of other departments.
- There is interaction and coordination of key state departments at the Council's quarterly meetings and through cooperative projects.
- The 2005 Legislative Audit found that the Council was not living up to its statutory responsibility to work with the Department of Education and Early Development to develop curricula on domestic violence and sexual assault for use in schools. Further, it was not consulting with Health and Social Services to develop standards and procedures for delivery of services in health care facilities.³
- AS 14.30.360(b) states that “The state board shall establish guidelines for a health and personal safety education program. Personal safety guidelines shall be developed in consultation with the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Upon request, the Department of Education and Early Development, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault shall provide technical assistance to school districts in the development of personal safety curricula. A school health education specialist position shall be established and funded in the department to coordinate the program statewide. Adequate funds to enable curriculum and resource development, adequate consultation to school districts, and a program of teacher training in health and personal safety education shall be provided.”

³ 2005 Legislative Audit, Legislative Budget & Audit Committee.
<http://www.legaudit.state.ak.us/pages/audits/2006/pdf/20039rpt.pdf>, February 7, 2008.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



- Currently there is not a health education specialist position in the Department of Education & Early Development, or program funding to support consultation to districts or teacher training in health and personal safety education.

Recommendations:

- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) would better equip the Council to work with various state agencies.
- The Legislature should provide additional funds to support the school health education specialist position as required by AS 14.30.360 to assist districts in the coordination and development of curriculum to address domestic violence, sexual assault, and interpersonal violence.
- The Council and State agencies need to demonstrate greater coordination of services at the department and division level in order to strengthen service provision at the local level. We recommend this be discussed during the strategic planning process.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

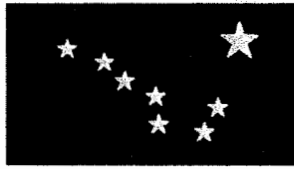


The statutory responsibilities and priorities of the Council. **– Structural issues within the Council.**

Findings:

- When the Council was formed, the Department of Corrections (DOC) was housed in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). Therefore a DHSS employee would have also represented the interests of DOC.
- Since that time, DOC has moved from DHSS into its own Department.
- The Department of Corrections plays a large role in dealing with the perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault, yet no corrections representative is currently present on the Council. Other major state departments, such as the Department of Law and the Department of Health and Social Services are represented.
- A disproportionate number of domestic and sexual assault victims are of Alaska Native descent.
- The rural community is not adequately represented on the Council.
- In the past, public seats on the Council have been held by employees of state departments. This gives the perception that the Council member could be beholden to the department rather than the best interests of the public and Council. It also skews the membership too heavily toward government employees.
- Currently the Council has 14 statutory mandates. The Task Force believes this is overly ambitious and very demanding. The Task Force is not making a recommendation to change the 14 mandates, but want to acknowledge the huge challenge that this presents to the Council.
- All Council staff are currently exempt positions. There is a perception that this causes challenges in the recruitment and retention of quality employees.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Recommendations:

- The Council should be expanded to include seats for the Department of Corrections and an additional public seat to be filled by a representative from Alaska's rural communities.
- Public seats on the Council should be representative of our Alaskan communities and not filled by employees of departments within the State of Alaska. This will ensure that the Council not appear to represent the state department interests only with few or no true public members.
- Staff of the Council should have non-exempt status to increase staff retention.
- The only member of the Council's staff that should be either exempt or partially exempt is the Executive Director.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The appointment process for members of the Council.

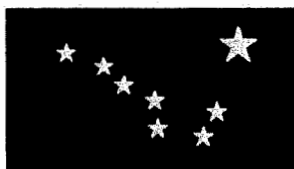
Findings:

- In 2001, the auditor reported that the Council allowed changes in reporting requirements for the grantees of the Network in violation of federal grant guidelines.
- The auditor concluded that the changes to the reporting requirements were allowed because of undue influence by the Network due to statutory language requiring the Governor to review recommendations for public members from the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (ANDVSA).
- The Task Force recognizes and appreciates the diligence of the auditors, but found no basis for concluding the existence of a causal relationship between changes in reporting requirements identified by the auditor and any resulting changes in grant management practices.
- Moreover, the identified perceived problem has not recurred even though the Network has continued to submit names to the Governor for consideration.
- There is confusion about who the Council is, their role and how they are different from the Network.
- Currently, Council members serve two-year terms, only allowing them to serve through one grant cycle. This limits their ability to understand the issues and process that the Council goes through in its grant cycle.

Recommendations:

- Mandatory ethics training for all Council members to make clear their role on the Council.
- Change language in statute from "shall" to "may" in regards to the Governor consulting ANDVSA regarding the appointment of public members to the Council.
- Extend terms from two to three years.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The location of the Council within the state administrative structure.

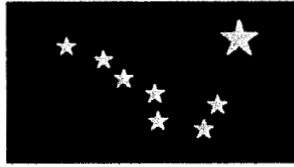
Findings:

- CDVSA is currently housed within the Department of Public Safety (DPS).
- Domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes.
- Crimes require evidence collection, interviews and investigations; investigations require interaction with the medical community, law enforcement and the court system in regard to domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Victims need to be acknowledged, validated and recognized as having experienced a criminal act and perpetrators need to know that they will be held accountable as criminals.
- It is appropriate for the Council staff to be in an agency that has the culture of law enforcement with the resources necessary to eradicating these offenses and hold criminals accountable for their actions.
- The relevant agencies, through their representatives on the Task Force, agree that the Council is appropriately housed in the Department of Public Safety.
- In extensive public hearings in four communities across the state it was never suggested that the Council be housed anywhere other than Public Safety.

Recommendations:

- The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault should remain in the Alaska Department of Public Safety.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The Council's compliance with grant management requirements.

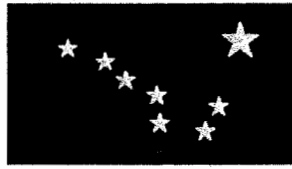
Findings:

- The grant application and management process is excessively time consuming, complex, outdated and onerous, especially for victim service providers.
- The current grant application and management process requires a duplication of effort for already overburdened staff among the state's victim service providers.
- Frequent staff turnover at CDVSA has created inconsistency in understanding and applying grant oversight.
- The Council has stewardship to ensure state monies are appropriately allocated through a fair and thoughtful grant process, that victims are served appropriately and that grantees are in compliance with state and federal grant conditions.
- Everyone could benefit from a more streamlined grant process with a view towards measurable outcomes.

Recommendations:

- The Council should consult with the State Department of Health and Social Services regarding their work with the Rasmuson Foundation in an effort to streamline the grant process and reduce the administrative burden for grantees and the state.
- Grant terms should allow a renewal period extension for an additional period if grant compliance is maintained and grant conditions have not changed.
- The Council should continue to work to establish clear guidelines, standards and parameters for grant applicants.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



The Council's mission, and the focus of the Council's mission on prevention.

The Statutory mission of the Council is:

The purpose of the council is to provide for planning and coordination of services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault or to their families and to perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide for crisis intervention and prevention programs. (AS 18.66.010)

The mission of the Council is:

The mission of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is to reduce the causes and incidence and to alleviate the effects of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Findings:

- The mission statement does not reflect the Council's statutory mission.
- The council continues to be reactive; responding to victims with immediate needs versus the overarching issues of ending violence through prevention and intervention.
- There are four key areas the Council should be addressing: prevention, intervention, crisis response and perpetrator accountability. The Council should address investment in each of these areas weighted on results-based data.
- The funds currently allocated to the Council focus primarily on providing statewide victim services with relatively small amounts available for accountability (batterers programs) and prevention.
- The state does not have adequate data collection systems and ongoing research on the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault upon which to make policy decisions and measure program outcomes.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Findings Continued...

- Batterer's Intervention Programs (BIP) around the state have low referral and high dropout rates. In some cases, the perpetrators start the program in prison, and are released before finishing the program or their probation expires before program completion. Due to cost, distance from a program or lack of consequences for not following up, many perpetrators stop attending and fail to complete the BIP.
- Anger management is different from batterer's intervention.
- Insufficient information is currently being gathered to determine the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs which applies both to funded and unfunded (but certified) programs. Measurable outcomes are needed, especially in the areas of batterer's intervention programs. With Alaska facing a deficit in coming years, future funding should be tied to evidence based outcomes.

Recommendations:

- The Council needs to develop a strategic plan. The strategic plan needs to simplify the Council's mission and focus on the four key areas.
- The Legislature and the Governor should extend the Council until 2014 to allow the Council time to develop and implement their strategic plan. (HB 334 is already moving through the Legislature to accomplish this.)
- The Council's mission statement should be rewritten to create a more proactive approach to the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault. The purpose of the Council should be to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault, not just respond to it.
- The Task Force suggests peer training for members of the Court system to ensure that victims receive a fair hearing when child custody is at stake.
- The Council should re-examine their 14 mandates to determine if any should be rewritten in statute.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



- The Council should collaborate with the national programs and organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Office of Violence Against Women, to solicit grants specifically geared toward prevention in an effort to focus some funding on preventing domestic violence and sexual assault.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Other issues of interest to the Task Force.

– Factors Outside the Purview of the Council

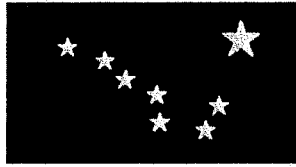
State Crime Lab

- Alaska is currently experiencing massive delays in analyzing evidence of crimes. This includes a significant backlog of DNA in sexual assault cases due to a high volume of reported incidents around the state.
- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) forensic nurses around the state collect samples from victims that report an assault, and beginning in 2009, collection will be made available, even if those victims who choose not to press charges. Those samples will need to be stored in a safe and secure environment.
- State legislation requiring all convicted felons to submit DNA samples will increase the demand for storage. However, having that information stored will aid in future convictions if the felon reoffends.
- Collection and processing of DNA for entry into a national database can detect serial offenders.

Statewide Media Campaign

- Alaska has seen a number of public service campaigns, such as “Click it or Ticket” and “Drink. Drive. Go to jail,” that have raised awareness statewide on specific issues.
- The Council should consider developing a statewide media campaign that targets Alaska’s various demographic groups and addresses the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault. Using models developed nationally, the messages should target specific groups by using spokespeople they can relate to.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Apparent Low Incidence of Law Enforcement Referral of Reports for Prosecution

- Anecdotally, in a number of public comments, we heard mention of the low incidents of referral of cases for prosecution statewide. While we have not collected statistical data to back this up, the public perception seems to be that there may exist a significant difference in the number of individuals that report being victims and the number of cases prosecuted. We recognize that there are a number of reasons why this might occur, but felt it should be mentioned in the report.
- Another aspect of this is the number of batterer's who fail to complete the Batterer's Intervention Program as a condition of their parole and have a warrant issued for them. While those warrants exist, law enforcement and prosecution don't have the resources to enforce them.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Batterer's Intervention Program

The Task Force received a letter dated July 18, 2007, from the Chair of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, Representative Ralph Samuels. The letter references the Batterer's Intervention Programs and reads, in part, "significant changes are needed for the organization and administration of the Batterer's Intervention Program (BIP) to allow for collection and analysis of program data."

July 18, 2007 letter from Representative Ralph Samuels is Appendix 4.

In response to this letter, and to the issue of BIP's in Alaska, the Task Force made the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Program funding should be contingent on the provider demonstrating the effectiveness of the program in preventing or reducing recidivism. If they cannot provide the documented effectiveness of the program, CDVSA should not provide funding nor should they certify these programs. Performance measures must be instituted and DOC's regulations will need to be changed to impose new reporting requirements. Defunding programs is not the only answer.
- State departments should establish a Memorandum of Understanding to develop an initiative to collect data. The goal would be to collect data regarding:
 - those ordered by the courts to participate in BIP;
 - those who attended and completed the BIP;
 - those who started but failed to complete the BIP;
 - and those who never participated

A comparison should be done as to which groups have the greatest rate of recidivism and a clear definition of what constitutes recidivism (arrest for DV related incident, violation of an existing restraining order, or the filing of a new restraining order could serve as easy reference points).

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Recommendations continued...

- CDVSA should also look at the sharp decline in the numbers of second and third offences when compared to the number who commit the first domestic violence offense. This would give greater insight into designing programs which have the greatest chance of making a positive impact. There is likely much benefit to implementing an assessment process to determine the need for a person to participate in a BIP and at what level. This assessment would function much like the one individuals are required to obtain regarding substance abuse.
- If we put into place a method of determining the level of need, we can likely come closer to identifying that core group of hardcore offenders and focus the limited resources on them rather than diluting the resources on the larger group.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Bethel, Alaska

October 4th & 5th, 2007

Task Force members met at the Long House Hotel in Bethel on October 4th and convened the first official meeting.

Members shared their knowledge and experience on the subjects of domestic violence and sexual assault, with many having spent time working in the field of victim services, law enforcement or court system.

Members discussed their feelings and opinions on the issue of domestic violence and sexual assault and determined what they hoped to get from each public hearing. In doing so, a list of community questions were developed to be asked at each public hearing.

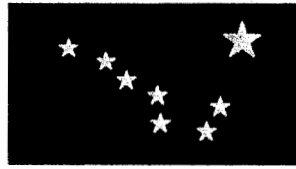
Members then had an opportunity to tour the Tundra Women's Coalition, a shelter and center designed to deal with domestic violence and sexual assault in Bethel and resources for numerous villages along the Kuskokwim. Shelter Director Michelle DeWitt showed members the facility and discussed the challenges of running a rural shelter with 4000-6000 visits annually and astronomical heating costs. Currently, their building is undergoing renovations, including window replacement and winterization upgrades.

That evening, the Task Force held its first public hearing. There was a great turnout with citizens from all areas of the community from the Mayor, to a SART nurse, teachers, victims, law enforcement, tribal leaders, victim's service providers and community activists.

The issues raised at the Bethel meeting include:

- The need for educational outreach funding.
- DV/SA are learned behaviors that can be changed with outreach to youth.
- Importance of keeping families together – either in the home or with other family members.
- Importance of educating a community and helping the community move out of poverty.
- Importance of regulation and control of BIPs.
- The lack of BIPs in many rural areas.
- Overworked law enforcement in the region make tackling the problem more difficult.
- Game violations appear to be a higher priority to the troopers than domestic violence and sexual assault. (public comment)

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

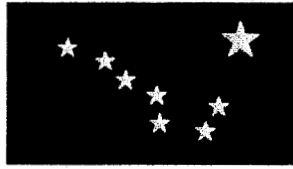


- School systems misinterpret the signs of domestic abuse – viewing the child as lazy or disinterested rather than scared and hungry.
- The need for enhancement of the VPSO program.
- High levels of poverty translate to high rates of DV/SA and alcohol abuse.
- Language barriers and cultural differences have a huge impact.
- In smaller villages, victims may have to deal with seeing their perpetrator walking around free.
- Shelter is almost always full.
- There is no Yupik word for justice.
- Yupik culture teaches you to work together and live together.
- A successful program in rural Alaska will have to be developed in rural Alaska by rural Alaskans.
- Programs work on alcohol abuse, but then the individuals are sent back to an environment where drinking is still taking place.
- The license requirements for substance abuse treatment providers are difficult to meet in the bush.
- 50% of all cases reported to OCS involve violence. (public comment)
- There is a lack of hope in some communities.

The following day the Task Force came back together to debrief from the previous evening's public hearing. Members also had presentations from both Peggy Brown of the Network and Chris Ashenbrenner of the Council.

When the meeting concluded, many members participated in the Bethel Peace Walk, joining community members in a march to end violence.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Fairbanks, Alaska

December 13th & 14th, 2007

The Task Force met at the Fairbanks Legislative Information Office on December 13th and discussed what they wanted to accomplish in Fairbanks, and what had been accomplished in Bethel. There was a sense that nothing is changing in regards to violence in Alaska; we've been facing the same problems for last 25 years.

It was clear from the Bethel meeting that answers to the instances of domestic violence and sexual assault need to come from inside the community, they can't be eradicated by CDVSA alone. There needs to be an increased focus on education, which is considered prevention. There seemed to be consensus that the rural community had to react and treat domestic violence and sexual assault differently because of the interdependent cultural dynamics of rural Alaska, and the language and cultural barriers.

The Task Force received a tour of the Interior Alaska Center for Nonviolent Living from Brenda Stanfield, Executive Director. It is a modern facility with a huge institutional kitchen that is being used to help teach job skills for people that come to the shelter so they can gain economic independence. Stevie's Place, designed to address the needs of children who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault is at the far end of the same building housed in the Resource Center for Parents and Children side of the building. These two agencies work very closely together.

Below is a brief recap of the public hearing testimony we heard in Fairbanks.

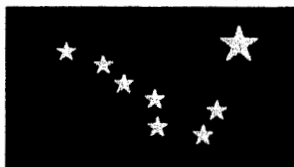
The public hearing heard an in-depth discussion regarding SART providers and the coming mandate for exams for every patient whether or not a police report is filed. This change will require more money for additional DNA processing and an increase of storage space for evidence collection.

The current system of dealing with perpetrators of violence is inadequate. There is no follow-up and no accountability for those who don't complete the program.

There was discussion about the need for data regarding domestic violence and sexual assault sentencing and the need to educate judges. In addition, cross-cultural training for law enforcement and judges to better equip them to work with victims.

Engaging and educating the public on the benefits of reducing violence in our state will be necessary to promote society's passive acceptance of violence.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



This is the first community where we heard testimony about the challenges with the military and dealing with perpetrators who are members of the armed services.

It was suggested that the Council review other states strategic plans during the development of Alaska's. In addition the Council should include strategies for education and prevention.

Tribal entities expressed concern at the lack of communication with their organizations when Alaska native women are disproportionately represented in DV and SA statistics. They told the Task Force we needed to find alternatives for women being removed for safety reasons, from rural communities to communicate and navigate city life. In addition, they advocated for alternative BIP noting that rural communities do not have access to the same programs as urban areas and questioned the possibility of video teleconferencing or other ideas to keep families intact. (this concludes public hearing comments)

Friday, December 14th during our working lunch, the major topics of discussion were accountability of perpetrators, education and rural challenges. Different programs were discussed as well as possible rural solutions, such as a tribal court system or talking circles.

There is a limited amount of money to address the issue of DV and SA in Alaska. It was agreed by all that the Fairbanks shelter was a model organization for the coordination of services to victims of DV/SA. Data is lacking to know which programs are working and which are not. The need for the development of a strategic plan by CDVSA was emphasized. Also, the need for more education in the classroom continues to be an area of opportunity to prevent and intervene before violent behavior is passed from one generation to the next.

The topic of the location of CDVSA came up and through this discussion, the Task Force came to the conclusion that CDVSA should remain in DPS. The group discussed the audit findings and addressed the need for better coordination and education. Through this came a discussion of state mandated curriculum.

We looked at the makeup of the members as it relates to a cross-section of the state. It was confirmed that DOC should have a seat at the CDVSA table. There was also conversation about adding rural representation to the board.

The working lunch concluded with a discussion whether or not the Network should be able to submit names to the Governor for consideration when vacancies occur on the Council's Board of Directors. It was decided to table this issue until we met in Juneau and we spoke directly with the auditor about her findings and recommendations.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Anchorage, Alaska January 8th & 9th, 2008

The Task Force met at the Legislative Information Office (LIO) in downtown Anchorage on January 8th and reviewed the proposed agenda for the two-day meeting.

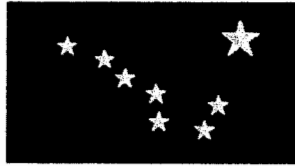
The committee then drove to the Anchorage Domestic Violence Shelter- Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) and toured their facility. AWAIC provided lunch for the Task Force during which time they gave a presentation on the issues surrounding domestic violence, CDVSA's funding of AWAIC, and statistics for their shelter program. Following this meeting the committee proceeded to the SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) site for a tour and discussion with the Municipality of Anchorage's SART Manager.

The committee reconvened at the Anchorage LIO for a community public hearing and finished the day with a brief wrap-up.

Below is a brief recap of Anchorage's public hearing comments.

- Keep CDVSA in Public Safety.
- Develop a strategic plan and long and short term goals.
- Provide focus on outcome measures.
- When developing a strategic plan consider including: education and prevention, council membership, other state departments, military court system and rural Alaska.
- Recognize Child Abuse as part of CDVSA's mission.
- Streamline the grant writing/reporting process for CDVSA.
- Fund someone to collect data/ Alaska based research is important.
- There is value in education/provide additional funding for DV/SA education.
- Better accountability after sentencing and arrests.
- Increase rural representation on the board.
- Clear scoring and priorities for grant awards.
- Increase access to legal services to hold perpetrators accountable.
- DV being used in custody battles "parental alienation."
- Expert witnesses key components in prosecution.
- New Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) recommendations as of 2009; may report SA without law enforcement-SART exams cost \$1,000 and up depending on location.
- Increased need for storage of DNA with new VAWA requirement.
- Consider forensic representation on CDVSA.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



- Facility audits are necessary for repair, renovation and equipment assessment.
- Rural sites have less availability to raise funds.
- Superior/Supreme Court Judges/Prosecutor training.
- Provide training to OCS and CASA's for DV & SA.

The Task Force met again on January 9th at the Anchorage LIO and proposed meeting times and dates for the final Task Force meeting in Juneau. The committee agreed that the public hearing should be on the first day of our meeting, wanted a tour of Juneau's domestic violence shelter – Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE), and approved meeting with the state auditor who prepared the 2001 and 2005 CDVSA audits to discuss her findings and recommendations.

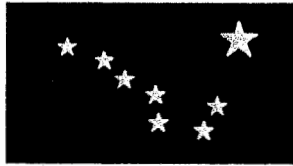
The committee recapped the public hearing from the night before and reconfirmed our intent to recommend a strategic planning process for the Council.

The second major theme was educating the court system on the issues surrounding DV/SA. A suggestion was made that a peer-to-peer group may work better at providing training inside the legal environment versus educators from individual DV/SA programs. It was pointed out that judges typically do not have a background in DV, SA and Child Abuse. There is a problem when Family Law in civil proceedings intersects with DV, SA and Child Abuse which is in Criminal Law.

Pay scales for those that work in shelters were discussed; it is believed that turnover is high because of low wages and marginal benefit packages. CDVSA turnover was discussed and it was suggested that their turnover may have to do with their status as exempt employees.

The discussion included the grant application and award process in CDVSA. It was stated that changes are currently underway at the Council, but it was clear from testimony at on site visits and during public hearings that the process was cumbersome, confusing and had unclear criteria when prioritizing the distribution of grant moneys. The Task Force discussed that this challenge should be part of the Council's strategic planning process. It was decided that the Task Force would recommend to the Legislature a time frame in which to have the strategic plan completed (no later than the end of 2008) but would not specifically dictate what the Council should address in the strategic plan (it is hoped they will review this document). To allow time to complete a strategic plan it was agreed that Rep. Fairclough and Sen. Elton would sponsor legislation to extend the reauthorization of CDVSA to 2014.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Juneau, Alaska

January 31st – February 2nd, 2008

The Task Force met at the State Capitol on January 31st and held our Juneau public hearing in the State Affairs room, reviewed our meeting agenda and coordinated a start time to tour AWARE, Juneau's DV shelter and meeting with Pat Davidson, Auditor and Director of Legislative Budget and Audit.

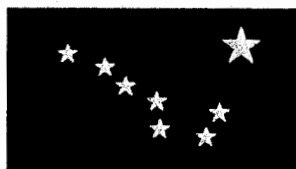
Following the public hearing portion committee invited the Executive Director of AWARE, a current Council board member and a former Executive Director of the Council to a roundtable discussion about the past and current challenges of the Council.

A brief recap of the public hearing and roundtable discussion follows.

- The state needs to provide additional dollars for prevention either through grant solicitation or other sources.
- It is challenging to retain employees in exempt positions at CDVSA.
- It was suggested a media campaign like "Click it or Ticket" should be implemented.
- Develop rational criteria to award grantees funding.
- Develop contract standards for operation of shelters.
- Support education to promote "healthy communities."
- Replicate the Council at community levels to develop solutions; true community plans.
- Standardize Batterer's programs; we heard people may not be able to afford or access programs.
- Research and compare that we are investing in programs which have a measureable benefit to our state.
- Alcohol is a big issue.
- Churches should be accessed to provide support in local communities.
- There needs to be training for the court system on understanding DV & SA.
- Consider using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as a measurement tool.

On February 1st the Task Force met with Pat Davidson, Director and Auditor for Legislative Budget and Audit who made findings and recommendations on CDVSA's reauthorization both in 2001 and 2005. The auditor concluded that the changes to the reporting requirements were allowed because of undue influence by the Network due to the statutory language requiring the Governor to review recommendations for public

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



members from the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (ANDVSA). She noted that two of the members serving on the Council at that time were names submitted to the Governor by the Network.

The Task Force recognizes and appreciates the diligence of the auditors, but the Task Force found no basis for concluding the existence of a causal relationship between changes in reporting requirements identified by the auditor and any resulting changes in grant management practices. Moreover, the identified perceived problem has not recurred even though the Network has continued to submit names to the Governor for consideration.

There is confusion about who the Council is, their role and how they are different from the Network. Currently, Council members serve two-year terms, only allowing them to serve through one grant cycle. This limits their ability to understand the issues and process that the Council goes through in its grant cycle.

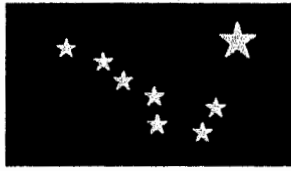
On Saturday, February 2nd the Task Force met with AWARE's Executive Director and participated in a presentation about the challenges and innovative ideas needed to address DV & SA in Juneau. We toured the shelter and then returned to the capitol to finalize our recommendations for our report to the Legislature on March 1st. In addition, we met with the longest serving Executive Director of the Council who currently works for the State in another department. She articulated and confirmed what the Task Force had heard across the state and agreed with many of the recommendations we had already discussed.

A brief recap of those topics:

- Science based assessments; outcome based programs.
- A representative of the Department of Corrections should be added to the Council; to remain balanced she recommended another public member seat.
- Orientation training for Council members.
- The Council should develop a strategic plan.
- Extend the term of members serving on the Council.
- Use a Public Health Model in addressing violence.
- Remove CDVSA staff from their exempt personnel status.

Chris Ashenbrenner, Executive Director of the Council presented an overview of CDVSA's statutory responsibilities. This had been done at our first meeting in Bethel but we thought it wise to refresh committee members prior to discussing this Task Force mandate of reviewing statutory responsibilities of the Council.

CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



Closing Remarks

The members of the CDVSA Legislative Task Force would like to thank everyone who assisted in the production of this report through participation in public hearings and arranging tours of victim service providers throughout the state.

This report can be found on the Task Force's webpage at:

<http://housemajority.org/coms/index.php?c=79>

The recommendations found in this report will not only require changes in statute, but also a great deal of effort on the part of the CDVSA Executive Director and Council, various State Departments and the Legislature itself.

The goal of this Task Force was not to simply find areas that the state should spend more money on to combat the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault. Any number of programs could benefit from increased funding. However, at the same time, the reality of these recommendations is that they will require investment on a state level to change behaviors.

The CDVSA Legislative Task Force respectfully requests that the Legislature consider the findings and recommendations contained within this report and make every effort to assist the Council in implementing the changes contained therein.