



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

**For Immediate Release**

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**New State “Check Yourself” Campaign Focuses on Sexual Assault Prevention**  
*April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month*

State health officials announce a new awareness campaign that encourages people to model behaviors that can help reduce sexual violence. Individuals are challenged to “Check Yourself” by examining their own behaviors and act as heroes and role models in challenging attitudes against sexual violence.

“We can all be courageous, fearless and strong in small ways to break the silence about sexual violence,” said Dr. Seth Foldy, State Health Officer. “Adults can show boys and girls how to challenge disrespectful attitudes that can lead to violence if left unchallenged. We set a powerful example for kids when we speak up if someone makes a degrading comment and when we show support for survivors of sexual violence.”

The Department of Health Services worked with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) to adapt a campaign which was successful in Vermont. WCASA will distribute materials throughout the state’s public health service system including local health departments, Women, Infants and Children nutrition programs, and reproductive health clinics.

Sexual violence can be thought of as a range of verbal and/or physical acts that break a person's trust and safety and are sexual in nature. Behaviors range from sexual harassment to unwanted fondling to forced penetration. All are done without consent.

According to WCASA, it is estimated that as many as 1 in 3 women have been the victim of sexual assault at some point in her life; that ratio is 1 in 5 for men. Victims are from all racial, cultural and economic backgrounds – they include our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends and grandparents. Approximately 93% of sexual assault survivors were violated by someone they knew and trusted.

In partnership with WCASA, the Department of Health Services Sexual Violence Prevention Program distributes federal funds, as well as monitors and evaluates statewide sexual assault prevention activities. Across the state, sexual assault victim programs are supported through these funds including training professionals, operating hotlines, counseling, and referral services. The Department also collaborates with partners statewide to increase public awareness and knowledge of sexual violence and its consequences.

*Note: copies of the “Check Yourself” posters are attached.*

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