

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH  
RESOLUTION #06-04

***Universal screening for intimate partner violence***

WHEREAS, recent research conducted by Group Health Cooperative Center for Health Studies of Seattle confirmed that intimate partner violence is common and is a health risk; and

WHEREAS, 44 percent of 3,429 women randomly surveyed reported experiencing intimate partner violence during their adult lifetime; and

WHEREAS, 30 percent of the women in the study experienced physical violence, 11 percent experienced rape, 24 percent had been threatened, and 31 percent experienced non-physical abuse; and

WHEREAS, intimate partner violence is four times as common (affecting nearly 1 in 2 women) as breast cancer (which affects nearly 1 in 8 women); and

WHEREAS, intimate partner violence frequently is an ongoing or recurring event, lasting an average of four years for physical abuse and eight years for controlling behavior; and

WHEREAS, although intimate partner violence risk is higher for women with lower income, it knows no social or economic boundaries, as demonstrated by the Group Health study, which involved health plan enrollees who were older and had higher incomes and more education than average; and

WHEREAS, in comparison with women who experienced no abuse, women subject to recent physical violence were four times as likely to report severe depression, three times as likely to report poor or fair health, and reported additional symptoms such as nausea, back pain, and chest pain; and

WHEREAS, recent physical violence by an intimate partner was shown to harm women's physical and mental health even more than do other common health conditions such as back pain, diabetes and some forms of cancer; and

WHEREAS, study results show that both physical and non-physical intimate partner violence significantly damage women's health and increase health care costs; and

WHEREAS, intimate partner violence is experienced by men as well as women, although the extent is still under review; and

WHEREAS, in light of the recent study findings and other research corroborating the high prevalence and adverse health impact of intimate partner violence, many researchers and clinicians are advocating for universal screening for intimate partner violence;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH:

1. The Board of Health supports universal screening for intimate partner violence in health care settings and the development of training and resources for health care practitioners so that they may refer those experiencing abuse to appropriate support services; and
2. The Board of Health requests that Public Health – Seattle & King County work with the King County Department of Community & Human Services and King County Domestic Violence Council to create a work program for the Board’s consideration that would address: (1) the development of outreach, training, and resources for health care practitioners regarding effective identification, assessment and response procedures for intimate partner violence screening, and (2) an assessment of the capacity and gaps in the referral network of support services for those experiencing intimate partner violence; and
3. The Board of Health requests King County to add screening and referral for intimate partner violence to its Health Reform Initiative and encourages businesses and other government agencies to adopt personnel policies regarding intimate partner violence and provide referral to resources; and
4. The Board of Health urges citizens to support domestic violence awareness efforts by talking to their health care practitioners about screening for intimate partner violence.

**KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**

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Julia Patterson, Chair

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Date of Adoption