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Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault and UAA Justice Center Provide New Data on Stalking in Alaska

The Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault and the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center released new information on the rates of stalking in Alaska. The new data, released as part of the awareness activities during National Stalking Awareness Month, is from the 2015 statewide Alaska Victimization Survey conducted as a partnership between the Council and the UAA Justice Center.

According to the 2015 survey, one in three adult women in Alaska have been victims of stalking in their lifetime. “That’s more than 80,800 adult Alaskan women,” said André Rosay, Ph.D., of the UAA Justice Center, the survey’s principle researcher. **“In 2015 alone, one in 17 adult women in Alaska (more than 15,300 women) were stalked.**

“In addition,” Rosay said, “the survey found a high correlation between stalking and domestic violence and sexual assault.”

In defining stalking, the Alaska Victimization Survey uses a definition from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey administered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This definition does not include all forms of nonconsensual contact, but it includes eight of the most common. “These include times when a perpetrator watched or

followed a person from a distance, or spied on a person with a listening device, camera, or global positioning system; approached a person or showed up in places, such as the person's home, workplace, or school when they were not wanted there; left strange and potentially threatening items for a person to find; sneaked into a person's home or car and did things to scare that person by letting them know they had been there; left unwanted messages, including text and voice messages; made unwanted phone calls, including hang-up calls; sent unwanted emails, instant messages, or messages through websites like MySpace or Facebook; left cards, letters, flowers, or presents to a person when they knew that person didn't want them," Rosay explained. "Respondents experienced stalking if they experienced these nonconsensual contacts multiple times and expressed fear," he said.

Also significant, was the fact that among Alaskan women who experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence in their lifetime, 50 percent were also stalked. "That number translates into more than 66,800 women," said Jayne Andreen, Interim Executive Director of the Council. "More than 27 percent – or 5,800 of the women who experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence in the past year were also stalked in the past year," she said.

"This survey data also highlights the need for local law enforcement and statewide shelter programs to work closely together in the response to stalking as a part of the entire domestic violence and sexual assault continuum," said Brenda Stanfill, Executive Director of the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living in Fairbanks.

The Alaska Victimization Survey was first conducted statewide in 2010 and was repeated statewide in 2015. Results from the survey are used to guide planning and policy development, effectively evaluate the impact of prevention and intervention services, and provide greater empirical support for preventing and responding to violence against women, said Andreen. "In 2011 through 2014, the years between the statewide surveys, regional surveys were conducted with results similar to the statewide numbers. The results of the statewide survey and each regional survey can be viewed online at: www.uaa.alaska.edu/justice/avs

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Note: Brenda Stanfill can be reached at the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living, 907-452-2293.