

Historic Victory for Health Care Response to Domestic Violence

In a landmark recommendation, the nation's leading panel of scientists agreed that every woman should have access to screening for domestic and intimate partner violence within her health coverage. This recommendation from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) sends a strong message about the benefits of health care interventions for women. The IOM determined that rates of violence are significant, and the data they reviewed confirmed that women can be helped by screening and counseling. As one of the Committee members stated, screening "can lead to positive interventions."

Leaders are calling this one of the biggest advances for women's health in a generation and clearly it is THE biggest health policy advancement related to domestic violence.

This is not a requirement for screening for domestic violence. It does however, break down significant barriers to integrating comprehensive responses to domestic violence and we believe it will create new opportunities to train providers how to identify and help patients in abusive relationships. The National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence will look for new opportunities to train providers on how to do so safely and encourage them to partner with domestic violence programs to promote the health of women.

Guidelines based on the IOM recommendations will be issued by HHS Secretary Sebelius by August 2nd to determine coverage of preventive health care screenings and care for women with no additional copayments or deductibles. Other IOM recommendations included coverage for a full range of reproductive health services including contraception. Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance plans will be required to cover the services recommended by HHS. Through this coverage, and with training for health care providers Futures Without Violence offers, we have the opportunity to improve the health and lives of thousands of abused women and children.

Attached is a link to the report brief and full report: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Clinical-Preventive-Services-for-Women-Closing-the-Gaps.aspx>. To see the related statement from Futures Without Violence, please go to <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>.