

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IMPACTED BY ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

PONTIAC, Michigan, December 2, 2008...HAVEN of Oakland County is experiencing an increase in crisis calls and requests for shelter as well as their other services. Is it a sign of the times?

Domestic violence victims are unfortunately facing the proverbial perfect storm. With economic pressures building, there are signs of increase in the incidence of violence; there are a lack of options for victims to take to escape; and non profits service agencies are being squeezed to serve more people with less funding.

INCREASING INCIDENCE

At HAVEN, we are seeing more severe physical injuries and a higher level of trauma. A 2004 National Institute of Justice study concluded that the rate of domestic violence is impacted by the number of times the male in the relationship was unemployed. For those individuals experiencing a violent relationship, the poor economy is having a dramatic impact on them. "The economic stress of being laid off, fear of losing a job, inability to find work, cost of fuel, and credit issues are all factors that are contributing to an escalation of violence", says HAVEN President Beth Morrison.

LACK OF OPTIONS

For many, there are few options but to stay in a violent relationship, as community resources are becoming exhausted. This speaks to broader issue of affordable housing and aid to those seeking it. A national survey of homeless people revealed domestic violence was the second most-frequently stated cause of homelessness for families, with 13 percent of homeless families saying that they had left their last place of residence because of abuse or violence, according to the Inter-agency Council on Homeless. For a domestic violence victim, there are numerous challenges for housing. Housing must be affordable, have adequate space for them and their family, and it must be in a safe location from their abuser

STRESSED RESOURCES

HAVEN has also, like many non-profits, seen a decrease in financial support. Corporate donations and individual donations are both down. The major federal funding source for domestic violence programs and shelters was cut by \$2.1million in 2008. Another major federal funding source which provides support for programs such as HAVEN was slashed by \$35 million. The economy and federal budget woes continue to chip away at our capacity to reach out to our community when it needs us more than ever.

For more info or to arrange an interview with HAVEN representative, please contact Melissa Bunker (313) 886-9074