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News Release

Planning for a Violence-free Utah

New sexual violence prevention plan released

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Sexual violence is a pervasive public health issue in Utah. In a 2006 survey, one in three Utah women reported they had experienced some type of sexual assault in their lifetime and one in eight was raped. More than seven percent of Utah adults report being a victim of sexual abuse in their lifetime. Among Utah high school students, a 2009 survey found that nearly 11% reported being in a violent dating relationship and more than 7% had been raped. Today, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and its partners unveiled a new plan to prevent sexual violence in Utah.

“Our vision is that Utah will one day be free from violence, and all residents will interact with each other in a healthy and respectful manner,” said Teresa Brechlin, UDOH Violence Prevention Coordinator. “This plan provides concrete action steps communities can take to make that happen,” she added. “We’re already seeing improvement in areas where primary prevention programs are being implemented.”

Effective primary prevention programs currently underway in Utah include:

- **Safe Dates program in Richfield.** The New Horizons Rape Crisis Center, in partnership with the University of Utah and Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, has begun implementation of the Safe Dates program. Safe Dates is a school-based program for students ages 12-18 designed to stop or prevent dating violence. Nationally, studies show a 56% to 92% reduction in reports of physical, serious physical, and sexual dating violence among participants.
- **Rape Prevention Coalitions in Cache and Rich Counties.** Forming strong partnerships with communities is a vital step in the prevention of sexual assault. Logan’s

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Community Abuse Prevention Services Agency (CAPSA) has spent more than 13 years developing successful partnerships with high schools and community-based organizations and providing educational programs, discussions, and peer-to-peer and youth leadership to thousands of students in Northern Utah.

- **D.A.T.E. program in Utah County.** The Center for Women and Children in Crisis has implemented the D.A.T.E. (**D**o communicate, **A**lways set boundaries, **T**ake a stand, and **E**xercise respect) curriculum for three years. The curriculum reaches students in grades 6-12 and has been modified for college-aged students and community groups. It incorporates positive skill building exercises designed to increase protective factors shown to prevent or reduce violence.

Protective factors are proactive efforts and were developed to counter Utah’s historically reactive response to violence, meaning resources are dedicated to responding to sexual violence after it occurs. However, *Utah’s Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Plan, 2010-2017* seeks to reduce sexual violence by enhancing social and community support and better availability of services, as well as teaching both girls and boys and men and women problem solving skills, self-efficacy, good peer relationships, parental supervision.

“The plan addresses the roots of the problem instead of the outcomes, after it’s too late,” said Anne Freimuth, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Utah and chair of the committee that developed the plan. “Every single Utahn has an opportunity and the responsibility to prevent sexual violence.”

Copies of *Utah’s Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Plan, 2010-2017* can be downloaded at <http://health.utah.gov/vipp/pdf/RapeSexualAssault/SVPPStrategicPlan2010-2017.pdf>.

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