



**Alaska's Council on
Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault**

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.
Mahatma Gandhi

Happy New (fiscal) Year and welcome to FY2021! FY2020 came and went in a blur...most likely because the second half of FY2020 was filled with incredible and unexpected challenges. Challenges that we are surviving with strength, kindness and an indomitable will!

Now that we are two weeks into fiscal year 2021, we want to give you some updates and let you know what is on our horizon and how we plan to move forward in the coming weeks. First, we recognize and accept that COVID-19 will continue to dominate our lives for the near future and possibly beyond. Health experts warn that we are still in the first wave of the coronavirus and without a coordinated plan, it will most likely get worse before it gets better. In the words for Dr. Anthony Fauci, "[we] don't make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline." It is important that we all work together to do everything in our power to respond, prepare and mitigate the impact of this virus on our families, colleagues, those seeking services and our communities.

- To assist in mitigation, CDVSA has secured another 1,000+ cloth masks. These are available to all CDVSA funded programs and upon request will send you as many as you need. These are washable cloth masks that have been made by inmates across the state housed in state correctional facilities. DOC is working to provide the state with as many masks as needed. What we know is that wearing masks is a key strategy to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 and it is clear we will be wearing masks for some time to come;
- As you know, CDVSA has received a small emergency COVID-19 grant from FVPSA with the intent to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency while addressing the evolving needs of domestic violence survivors and local domestic violence programs within Alaska. The funding was established to focus on three areas of service: to prevent; prepare; and respond to the current COVID-19 health emergency. Our proposal for these funds is to develop a strong and sustainable partnership with the state Division of Public Health and CDVSA to combat the current virus and prepare for ongoing and future public health crises and challenges. The partnership will focus on testing, contact tracing, clear policies and



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practices and to expand and enhance DV shelter and service program's relationships and collaboration with local public health centers and staff across Alaska. We are excited that Elizabeth Pietralczyk, MD will be leading this project in partnership with CDVSA. Dr. Pietralczyk practices medicine at Elmendorf AFB, as a Family Medicine/ Obstetrician/ Aerospace Medicine Physician with United States Air Force. In addition, Dr. Pietralczyk is currently working to obtain a Master of Public Health degree and will be working with us as part of her required practicum. Dr. Pietralczyk may be reaching out to you soon as she determines what your needs are from this project. We are very excited about this opportunity and will provide more information as we move forward;

- This morning the Department of Health and Social Services released information about CARES Act funding to be distributed to Alaska nonprofits. \$35 million is available to offer grants to nonprofits and faith-based organizations that provide critical services to Alaskans for the purpose of preventing or alleviating negative impacts of COVID-19 on families, children, jobs, and the economy. For more detail go to alaskacf.org/cnrf. A copy of the press release is attached;
- After a couple of month delay, CDVSA and the UAA College of Health are moving forward with the 2020 Alaska Victimization Survey. The last survey was completed in 2015, the first in 2010. We initially planned to begin interviews in early May; due to COVID-19 the survey's start was delayed. This important survey and study of women's health and experiences with injuries began this week. Women 18 years and older are being contacted by Pacific Market Research, a Washington state-based survey group contracted by UAA COH. Phone numbers have been randomly selected from both landline and cell phone lists, and the UAA COH anticipates 2000 Alaska women will be interviewed by the close of December 2020. Participants will receive \$35 if they complete the roughly 30-minute interview. The results will be used to shape statewide policy and practice for keeping women in Alaska healthy and safe. For information about past AVS results go to: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/justice-center/research/alaska-victimization-survey>. Next week CDVSA will begin outreach and education about the survey through media, social media and sharing information with our partner agencies;



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- Another project related to the AVS is the development of an Intimate Partner Violence-Interactive Data Dashboard (IPV-IDD) in partnership with the UAA Alaska Justice Information Center (AJiC). This is a small research grant funded by the Justice Research and Statistic Association, with funding from VOCA and available to state VOCA administrative agencies and federally identified State Statistical Analysis Centers (AJiC is Alaska's SAC). The interactive data dashboard will include data from the 2010 and 2015 AVS. The project will be concluded September 2020. More details will come as the project nears completion, including a virtual presentation of how it works. We believe this interactive data will be a critical resource for programs, policymakers, researchers, media and the public at large;
- We want to give everyone a heads up that this year's CDVSA All Grantee Meeting will not be held in person (no surprise to anyone I am sure). For a short-time we thought maybe we would be clear to travel and gather in November, but we no longer see that as a wise or feasible option. We are currently discussing alternative ways to share information and provide training. CDVSA will be reaching out later to solicit suggestions and training topic needs/ideas. Stand by...
- On August 17-18 the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will be hosting an Alaska training event – 2020 Virtual Forum on Intimate Partner Violence, Human Trafficking, and Domestic Violence. The forum will prioritize the health needs of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals and communities impacted by IPV, human trafficking and DV. The agenda is being finalized and information/registration will be posted soon. We will send more details soon and post information on our website;
- On August 19 the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center will be offering a virtual training: SOAR to Health and Wellness. SOAR offers standardized, accredited trainings for individuals, organizations, and communities that address human trafficking. For more information or to register go to: <https://nhhtac.acf.hhs.gov/training/virtual-soar-health-and-wellness-august>;
- Finally, we want to give you a heads up that CDVSA has been notified we are scheduled for an Enhanced Financial Monitoring and Technical Assistance Desk Review to be conducted by the federal Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). This review will be conducted in late August/early September and will include a



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review of FFY17 and FFY18 awards for our SASP, STOP and VOCA grants, as well as FFY19 VOCA. This will be a time consuming and detailed review of both financial and programmatic aspects of these federal grant programs. We do not know, at this time, if this review will impact the sub-recipients of these funds; it is possible there could be follow-up questions for those sub-grantees randomly selected for a file review. When we know more, we will pass the information along. We believe our commitment to compliance, monitoring and strong policies and practices will provide us with a solid and positive review outcome.

Thank you for all that you do. We look forward to working together to create safe, healthy and sustainable programs and services for all victims of domestic and sexual violence and others impacted by violent crimes. Have a great weekend and contact us if there is anything we can do to assist!