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### **April Marks Sexual Assault Awareness, Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness Month**

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – April, 2018 marks [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) and [Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month](#) in Alaska. Governor Bill Walker has signed proclamations making the designations, and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) is reminding Alaskans about resources that exist to protect and assist victims, and the importance of engaging our youth to help prevent abuse and violence from occurring in the first place.

“Families and communities must come together to create strong, healthy support networks by providing safe and nurturing homes free of violence, abuse, and neglect, while extending helping hands to children and families in need,” Governor Walker said in one proclamation. “I encourage all Alaskans to do just that and to support individuals and organizations that provide services to at risk and abused children.”

Alaska rates of sexual assault and child abuse and neglect are concerning. According to data from the [2015 Alaska Victimization Survey](#), 40% of Alaska women have experienced intimate partner violence during their lifetime, and 33% have experienced sexual violence during their lives. In 2017, the Office of Children’s Service received [over 20,000 reports of child maltreatment statewide](#). CDVSA provides resources and support to victims and their communities, and works to educate Alaskans on understanding the signs of violence or abuse, and how to appropriately intervene.

“Communities across the state are taking action to address and prevent sexual assault and child abuse,” CDVSA Chair Rachel Gernat said. “While we have made progress as a state, it is important that we continue working together to create safe homes and communities for all Alaskans.”

CDVSA sponsors 20 victim service programs across Alaska, most of which provide emergency shelter. Programs also provide safety planning and community-based advocacy to both victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual assault. A person does not need to be a shelter resident in order to receive services. Even though most programs are located in hub communities, all provide services to rural areas. For more information or to find a victim service program near you, visit [dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Services/VictimServices](https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Services/VictimServices), or call the CARELINE at 877-266-4357.

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