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NEWS

Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

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State Health Officials Join Community Agencies in Preventing Teen Dating Violence in Denver and Aurora

DENVER—The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is joining forces with community-based agencies to develop programs in Denver and Aurora that prevent teen dating violence.

Teen dating violence applies to teenagers between the ages of 10-19 years who experience physical, sexual or psychological harm by a current or former dating partner.

The purpose of the Denver-Aurora Teen Dating Violence Prevention Initiative is to raise the priority of teen dating violence among public health agencies and prevent violence before it occurs.

Agnieszka McCort, Sexual Violence Prevention Program development specialist at the Department of Public Health and Environment, said, “Through the initiative, we hope to generate recommendations for strengthening communities to plan, implement and support programs in Denver and Aurora.”

McCort said teen dating violence is a serious problem in the United States. Of the 72 percent of eighth- and ninth-graders who date, one in four each year report verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Understanding Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet available at <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/TeenDatingViolence2009-a.pdf>. In addition, approximately 10 percent of students nationwide report being physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months.

The task force of community-based agencies leading these efforts include the Asian Pacific Development Center, the Colorado Anti-Violence Program, the Conflict Center, Denver Center for Crime Victims, Gateway Battered Women’s Services, Project PAVE, Safehouse Denver and Safehouse Progressive Alliance, the Tri-County Health Department, and Denver Public Health.

Task force members will be charged with completing an inventory of teen dating violence primary prevention activities, programs and policies in Denver and Aurora communities, as well as conducting assessments of agencies' capacities. Additionally, a team of violence prevention and positive youth development experts will convene to assess the statewide capacity to support local efforts. The information gathered will be used to generate recommendations for local leaders and public health partners to support teen violence prevention programming in Denver and Aurora communities and statewide.

For further information on the initiative and its long-term goals, please contact Agnieszka McCort at 303-692-2591 or email: agnieszka.mccort@state.co.us.