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***Oregon Departments of Human Services and Justice call for new approach to preventing violence, release comprehensive plans***

NOTE TO REPORTERS: A contact list of local sexual violence and domestic violence responders is attached to this news release.

Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) officials joined Attorney General Hardy Myers today in calling for changes in how communities deal with violence against women as two new prevention plans that recommend how to do so were released.

"Violence against women is pervasive throughout Oregon," said Myers. He cited a 2004 DHS study that found 31 percent of Oregon women surveyed had experienced one or more types of violence--threats, stalking, physical or sexual assault--within the prior five years.

"Until now, the predominant responders have been women's crisis service organizations, law enforcement, the justice system and hospital emergency departments," said Myers.

"These principal players have and continue to play critical roles in providing access to services for victims," said Mel Kohn, M.D., state epidemiologist. "We also need to move upstream and create an emphasis on primary prevention, so we can stop violence against women from occurring in the first place."

Myers' and Kohn's remarks reflect strategies contained in the two plans. Both are based on a model that recognizes a relationship between people and their environments and the influences of individual biology, personal history, relationships, community, institutions and the broader society, Kohn said.

The "Oregon Violence Against Women Prevention Plan" identifies six major goals, along with strategies and potential implementation activities:

- Identify and act to change societal factors that condone and perpetuate violence against women.
- Improve policies and practices and increase resources and capacity among institutions including the health care sector, law enforcement, the legal system, education and social services.
- Link prevention efforts within communities, encourage they explore new approaches and encourage response teams to emphasize primary prevention.
- Promote healthy non-violent relationships.
- Increase the individual safety of girls and women in relationships and social environments.
- Promote public health surveillance and epidemiology, program evaluation and research.

The second document, "Recommendations to Prevent Sexual Violence in Oregon: A Plan of Action," calls for a shift toward primary prevention and identifies three priority groups:

- Young women--the group with the highest victimization rate.
- Young men--the most frequent perpetrators of sexual assault.
- Women with developmental disabilities--more than 90 percent will experience sexual violation at some point in their lives.

"We call upon higher education, schools, faith communities and social service and health care organizations to join in combating violence," Kohn said. "They are key players, because they can implement primary prevention activities in the context of their work with professionals, children and families."

"Preventing violence means changing social norms and attitudes among individuals, communities and institutions," said Katherine Bradley, Ph.D., R.N., administrator of child and family health programs in DHS. "We will need broad-impact activities such as policy and legislative changes, educational campaigns, early intervention programs and data gathering to measure the magnitude of the problem."

The plans were developed through work groups that had representation from DHS, public health and social services programs, the attorney general's office, criminal justice system, Oregon state police, higher education and women's crisis organizations.

The next step is to present the plans to communities throughout Oregon. DHS will work with local partners to identify forum hosts and build presentation teams, Kohn said.

The "Oregon Violence Against Women Prevention Plan" is on the Web at "Recommendations to Prevent Sexual Violence in Oregon: A Plan of Action" can be found at

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### *Sexual violence and domestic violence--local media contacts*

#### **Bend**

Toni Ryan, Executive Director, Central Oregon Battering and Rape Alliance  
(541) 382-9227

#### **Coquille**

Judge Richard L. Barron, (541) 396-3121 x245

#### **Corvallis**

Nancy O'Mara, Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, (541) 758-0219

#### **Depoe Bay**

Mayor James White, (541) 765-8922

#### **Eugene**

Nadia Telsey, Breaking Free, (541) 343-5513

Sarah Salisbury, Marriage and Family Therapist, (541) 686-4310

Emilee Coulter-Thompson, Sexual Assault Support Services, (541) 484-9791 xt. 306

#### **Hood River**

Kris Dallman, Helping Hands Against Violence, (541) 386-4808

#### **Klamath Falls**

Wanda Powless, Klamath Crisis Center, (541) 884-0390

#### **LaGrande**

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**Medford**

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**St. Helens**

Brandi Bonney, Columbia County Women's Resource Center, (503) 397-7110

**The Dalles**

Donna Langer, Haven From Domestic Violence, (541) 296-1662

**Tillamook**

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