

To: Healthy St. Mary's Partnership

From: Kim Belvin, St. Mary's County Commission for Women

Date: November 25, 2024

Subject: Request for Position Statement on Public Policy--Teen Dating Violence Education

The St. Mary's County Commission for Women, in working to reintroduce teen dating violence (TDV) prevention education in St. Mary's County Public Schools, respectfully requests the support of HSMP in the form of a position statement outlining the impacts and prevalence of TDV and the efficacy of such education. Alternatively, should a Letter of Support be more appropriate, the Commission requests such.

To be considered:¹

Impacts:

Health Impacts of Teen Dating Violence:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Risky sexual behaviors: unprotected sex, pregnancy, multiple sex partners, STIs
- Eating disorders
- Thoughts of suicide
- Increased risk of re-victimization in college and adulthood

Prevalence:

In Maryland, 10.1% of high school students reported experiencing physical dating violence and 10.3% reported experiencing sexual dating violence.

Efficacy:

TDV can be prevented when teens, parents, schools, and communities work together to implement evidence-based prevention strategies. School-based dating violence prevention programs have shown to be effective in preventing physical, sexual, and emotional violence in adolescent dating relationships and may help prevent violence in adult relationships as well.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Kim Belvin,
St. Mary's County Commission for Women

kdbelvin@gmail.com
(240) 434-2878

¹Governor's Family Violence Council, Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, & Hogan, L. (2021). Healthy Teen Dating: A guide for educators and youth service providers. <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/fvc-healthy-teen-dating-guide.pdf>