



NASHIA Observes NDVAM

The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) is joining other organizations in promoting October as **National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)**, first promoted in 1989. NASHIA is aware that domestic violence can result in a brain injury, physical injury, psychological trauma, and even death. The devastating consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime. NASHIA supports legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), a 1994 law that protects and provides resources for individuals who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence, and is looking for an avenue to support training, screening and assistance for individuals who sustain a brain injury due to abuse.



DOJ Awards Grants to Address Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

On October 5, the U.S. Department of Justice announced more than \$476 million in Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) grants and joined law enforcement partners, victim services professionals, advocates and communities across the country in observing October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The funding supports projects that meaningfully address the needs of underserved and marginalized survivors; improve access to justice; enhance survivor

Senate Committee Hears Testimony on Strengthening the VAWA

On Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing, "Renewing and Strengthening the Violence Against Women Act." Lisa O. Monaco, Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice, was the lone testifier. Read her testimony [here](#).

On March 17, the House approved with bipartisan support H.R. 1620, the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2021. VAWA was first passed in 1994 law to protect and provide resources for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The authorization expired in 2018. It has now been eight years since VAWA was last authorized.

H.R. 1620, sponsored by Rep. Sheila Jackson (D-TX), modifies and reauthorizes through FY2026 programs and activities under the VAWA.

GAO Report -- Last summer, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released the [report](#), "Domestic Violence: Improved Data Needed

safety; hold accountable those who have caused harm; and provide training and technical assistance to an array of professionals and systems working to address sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking in every State and Territory, as well as dozens of tribal communities.

To review the type of grants awarded you may view [here](#).



President Proclaims October as National Awareness and Prevention Month

On September 30, President Biden issued a proclamation to call attention to October as **National Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month**, which in part states:

During National Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, we honor the tremendous dedication of advocates and service providers, honor the courage and resilience of survivors, and recommit ourselves to standing with them for safety, dignity, and justice. There is still much work to do, and it will take all of us to do it. We must rededicate ourselves to creating a society where domestic violence is not tolerated, where survivors are supported, and where all people have an opportunity to thrive without fear of violence or abuse.

Read the proclamation [here](#).

to Identify the Prevalence of Brain Injuries among Victims.” This was in response to a report accompanying the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 calling for GAO to review the status of research and efforts to promote awareness of the relationship between intimate partner violence and TBI, among other things.

After conducting a review of federal, State, and local initiatives, GAO recommended the Secretary of HHS should develop and implement a plan to improve data collected on the prevalence of brain injuries resulting from intimate partner violence and use these data to inform HHS’s allocation of resources to address the issue.

NASHIA is promoting the GAO report to lawmakers as they consider reauthorization of the VAWA.

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [Intimate Partner Violence Prevention](#).
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), [Intimate Partner Violence](#).
- [The Impact of COVID-19 and Brain Injury](#), NASHIA.
- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network -- [Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury](#).
- University of Nebraska Medical Center: [Study: High incidence of brain injury in survivors of domestic violence, 2019](#).

Understanding the Intersection of Brain Injury and Domestic Violence

Many people survive domestic violence, but have permanent physical and emotional problems as the result. Domestic violence may be physical resulting in a traumatic

Behavioral Issues

- Depression
- Increased impulsivity

brain injury (TBI) caused by the head forcefully hitting an object such as a wall, or from an object used to strike the head or by something passing through the skull and piercing the brain, such as a gunshot wound.

Injury can also result from non-TBI, such as strangulation, sometimes referred to as choking, that constricts blood flow to the brain and/or airway, causing the inability to breathe resulting in impairments of memory, attention and other cognitive functioning. A victim may or may not lose consciousness at the time of injury. And, he or she may not seek medical attention for the abuse.

While many factors may contribute to the impact of the injury, common symptoms associated with a brain injury include:

Cognitive Issues

- Short term memory loss
- Problems with organization and initiation
- Difficulty with concentration and attention
- Difficulty with task completion
- Problems with self-monitoring

Physical Issues

- Balance and visual difficulties
- Slurring of speech
- Fatigue
- Sleep

- Increased tension and anxiety
- Inappropriate behavior
- Personality changes
- Decreased frustration tolerance

A person experiencing domestic violence and living with a brain injury must negotiate a very complex set of life circumstances, such as employment and economic concerns, which may prevent the person from leaving the situation. For these and many other reasons, individuals living with brain injury as the result of domestic violence may need treatment for the injury, counseling, supports and assistance in navigating a path to a safe and livable life.

Knowing the signs of a brain injury may be the first step in helping one to leave the situation and make new plans free of abuse. View the video below from the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and The Ohio State University to learn more.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HEAD INJURY
ADMINISTRATORS**



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