



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

**Department of
Health & Mental
Hygiene**

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Commissioner

**Mayor's Office to
Combat Domestic
Violence**

Yolanda B. Jimenez
Commissioner

Dear Health Care Provider:

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to a pattern of physical, psychological, sexual and/or economic abuse by a current or former partner. Also known as domestic violence, IPV is a serious public health problem. Every year, approximately 4,000 women and 900 men are treated in New York City emergency rooms for IPV. Almost half (44%) of women killed in NYC each year are killed by their intimate partners. Pregnancy may be a time of increased risk for IPV. In a survey of 2,000 NYC women who gave birth in the past year, approximately 4% reported experiencing physical IPV during pregnancy.

Aside from the risk of injury and death, IPV significantly increases the risk of other mental and physical health problems, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, stroke and asthma. If undetected, IPV can result in misdiagnoses and inappropriate treatment or management of these health conditions.

Primary care providers play a critical role in identifying patients affected by IPV and referring them for appropriate support. Evidence shows that most patients want their health care providers to inquire about IPV, and screening increases the likelihood that patients will disclose that they have been abused. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene strongly recommends that primary care providers:

- **Screen all patients for IPV and encourage disclosure through routine inquiry and dialogue.**
- **Conduct a clinical assessment of all patients who disclose abuse or for whom abuse is suspected, and document findings thoroughly.**
- **If patients disclose IPV, promptly refer them to social and legal services.**

Strategies to facilitate communicating with patients around this sensitive issue are described in this Intimate Partner Violence Action Kit. Your Health Department Representative is visiting you to discuss ways of applying these clinical tools, provider resources and patient education materials in your practice. Thank you for your dedication and contribution to the health of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Commissioner
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene

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