

# **AMH Supports Domestic Violence Awareness**

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ALTON, IL – Alton Memorial Hospital remembers victims of domestic violence and urges everyone to remain aware, even though the COVID-19 pandemic prevents the annual remembrance event usually held in the AMH Healing Garden.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic violence was a significant problem even before the pandemic, but the health crisis has caused a spike in incidents of abuse with families staying closer to home than usual for the past several months. In Madison County, 29 children, 51 women, and 22 men (total 102) have died in domestic violence related circumstances since 1996.

According to the Oasis Women's Center in Alton:

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.
- In the United States, 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner.
- On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls made to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.
- 1 in 3 female murder victims and 1 in 20 male murder victims are killed by intimate partners.
- Of all murder-suicides, 72 percent involve an intimate partner. Of these murder-suicides, almost all (94 percent) are female.

Any external factors that add stress and financial strain can negatively impact survivors and create circumstances where their safety is further compromised. Closures of schools and child care facilities during the pandemic have only added to the stress at home.

“We need to protect those who are the most vulnerable in our society, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and animals,” said Tina Culp from the Oasis Women's Center. “We need to make abusers accountable for their crimes against their victims. We need to intervene when we see or hear abuse occurring and to know the resources available for us to help us do that. We need to break the silence surrounding domestic violence and to help all victims of abuse find safety and healing. This is why all of us must be ready and willing to join together and break the cycle of domestic violence.”

Because of the prevalence of domestic violence, Alton Memorial Hospital in 2002 began screening for domestic violence everyone 12 and older who was being assessed in the hospital. Trained staff members confidentially ask these patients if they feel safe at home or have experienced mental, physical or sexual abuse.

Alton Memorial supports a coordinated domestic violence committee that includes members from the hospital staff, Zonta Club of Alton-Wood River, Oasis Women's Center and the Third Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council.

If you are a victim of domestic violence and need help, call 618-465-1978.