



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **October 12 is Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day**

**Press Conference Will Highlight Domestic Violence in Central Illinois;  
Advocates Ask Health Providers to Screen All Patients for Abuse**

CHAMPAIGN – Wednesday, October 12 is Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day, and local advocates are using the occasion to highlight the problem of domestic violence in Champaign County and other Central and Southern Illinois counties.

Illinois Health Cares will hold a press conference on October 12 at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Main Building, 710 N. Neil St., from 2-3 p.m. The event is designed to bring attention to the local problem of domestic abuse and to urge health providers to ask every patient they see whether he or she is a victim of abuse.

On October 12, advocates and volunteers will distribute cards with a list of "Safety Questions" health providers can ask their patients to uncover problems of domestic abuse.

Last year there were 2,075 reports of domestic battery in Champaign County. Of these, 1,313 led to charges against offenders. In 2004, 660 orders of protection were requested.

In 2004, the Senior Resource Center received 36 reports of elder abuse in Champaign County. Involuntary confinement, physical abuse, emotional and sexual abuse were among the allegations.

Local substance abuse treatment providers report that up to 75 percent of those in treatment are, or have been, victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse.

More evidence of the extent of the local problem is available in the daily newspaper. Here are a few of the cases in the past year in Central and Southern Illinois:

DANVILLE - September, 2005: Kimberly Gray, 34, is fatally shot in her Newton home. A preliminary autopsy report found that she had been shot multiple times. She had recently moved herself and her young children away from her husband, Kenneth A. Gray, 34. Mr. Gray is charged with four counts of first-degree murder in connection with her death.

DANVILLE, September, 2005: A 21-year old Danville man is convicted of fatally stabbing his former girlfriend, Wyneva Johnson, 19, a high school senior and track star at Danville High School.

PAXTON - August 2005: A Ford County jury finds a Gibson City minister guilty of repeated sexual assaults on a woman over a six-year period that began when she was 14 years old.

URBANA - July 2005: Byron A. Ward, 35, pleads innocent to charges of intimidation, unlawful restraint and domestic battery with great bodily harm. Ward is accused of punching, pushing and threatening his ex-girlfriend, dragging her into an apartment and - after his arrest - threatening to "put a bullet in her head." His trial is this month.

PEORIA - July 2005: An alleged serial killer, Larry Bright, 38, confesses to killing eight Peoria area women. All of the victims are African American women.

URBANA - June 2005: A Champaign dentist, Scot E. Brewer, 48, is arraigned on charges he sexually assaulted a female employee in his office. His trial is scheduled for November.

BELLEVILLE - May 2005: Nicole Jacobs and Wayne Dunnivant are found stabbed multiple times in Jacobs' apartment. Nicole Jacobs' husband, Leron Wilborn, later confesses to the killings.

PIPER CITY - November 2004: Jesus Alva, 39, stabs his fiancé, Michealina Helm, to death with a butcher knife. She had just moved out of their shared home. Alva had been convicted of misdemeanor domestic battery against Ms. Helm one month before he killed her.

These are only a small fraction of the cases of domestic abuse in our community.

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