



COLORADO COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS SOUND ALARM OVER DANGERS OF HUD'S HUMAN TRACKING SYSTEM

(DENVER, CO - OCTOBER 6, 2004) - Marking Domestic Violence Awareness month, the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) are speaking out about the dangers of HUD's Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) and urging the White House to intervene to enforce victim safety.

HMIS, an invasive human tracking system, compromises individual safety and confidentiality by requiring client identifying information such as the name, last address, date of birth, and social security number of all individuals seeking assistance from transitional housing programs, emergency shelters, soup kitchens, or other homeless support services. CCADV is urging HUD and the White House to reinstate a previously granted exemption allowing domestic violence programs and individual victims to provide non-identifying information to HMIS.

"Without this exemption, this tracking system jeopardizes the lives of victims," says Trish Thibodo, executive director of CCADV. "HUD is forcing programs to violate the promise we make to battered women – that they are safe and their information is kept completely private."

Contrary to long standing confidentiality protocols, the new HUD regulations require domestic violence service providers and other homeless agencies to submit their clients' identifying information to a centralized server within their region. CCADV believes even advanced technology safeguards cannot adequately protect the safety and privacy of a victim once her information leaves the agency. "There is no firewall that can keep a victim's information out of the hands of an abuser who works for the system or knows someone who does," said Thibodo.

The original HMIS standards proposed in 2003 provided an exemption for domestic violence service providers and individual victims. However, the exemption was removed in the final standards released earlier this summer despite repeated pleas from organizations representing domestic violence victims. Local, state, and national advocacy groups are urging HUD to immediately restore protections for victims.

Please visit www.nnedv.org/hmis for background materials on HMIS and its negative impact of victims of domestic violence.

Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) - www.ccadv.org - is a 26-year old statewide, grassroots, nonprofit organization providing resources, education, and training, and serving as a voice to more than 80 members and 60 programs serving some 40,000 battered women and children in Colorado each year.