

Statement by Cory J. Jensen

Men's Health Network

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**Meeting of the
National Advisory Committee on
Violence Against Women**

April 24, 2003

As the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women prepares to advise the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services with practical policy advice, I would like to comment on a few issues in the hopes that the committee would address these concerns.

The Violence Against Women Act was created to address the terrible problem of domestic violence. Nobody should live in fear of violence within their home. Yet men that are victims of domestic violence are being denied services. Although the bill is titled the Violence Against Women Act, the intent is to provide services to victims regardless of gender.

In October of 2000 Senator Hatch made the following statement which is included in the Congressional Record.

There is one final issue that has been raised, recently, which we would like to take this opportunity to address, and that is the eligibility of men to receive benefits and services under the original Violence Against Women Act and under this reauthorizing legislation ...Despite the need to direct federal funds toward the most pressing problem, it was not, and is not, the intent of Congress categorically to exclude men who have suffered domestic abuse or sexual assaults from receiving benefits and services under the Violence Against Women Act. ... Men who have suffered these types of violent attacks are eligible under current law to apply for services and benefits that are funded under the original Act...We anticipate that the executive branch agencies responsible for making grants under the Act, as amended, will continue to administer these programs so as to ensure that men who have been victimized by domestic violence and sexual assault will receive benefits and services under the Act, as appropriate.

While Senator Hatch's statement makes it very clear that services for men can be provided under VAWA, grants are being categorically denied because they offer services to men.

In Texas, a grant application was determined to be ineligible for further review because it falls under ineligible activities, "programs that focused on children and/or men."

In Delaware, another application was denied because it focused on men who are victims of domestic violence. According to the grant rejection letter, "funding must be allocated to programs that focus on violence against women."

While the intent of VAWA was to provide services to all victims of domestic violence, the reality is that men are being denied help. It is my hope that the committee would make sure that those administering the services under VAWA are made to understand that organizations which provide services for men are eligible for grants.

Simply opening up the current services to men, may not be enough. Programs for men need to be run by persons who are familiar with the issues of male violence. Men that are victims of domestic violence are naturally reluctant to come forward with their problem. Experts specifically trained to deal with this segment of the population need to administer these programs.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide my input and look forward to providing any assistance that I can.

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