

**Contact: Patsy Hall-Hammeren  
NDCAWS/CASAND  
701-255-6240, ext. 23**

## **April Is Sexual Assault Awareness Month *NDCAWS/CASAND Releases 2009 Sexual Assault Statistics***

**Bismarck, April 1, 2010** – The North Dakota Council on Abused Women’s Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault in (NDCAWS/CASAND), which is made up of 21 local domestic violence/sexual assault crisis intervention centers around the state, has released its 2009 statistics on sexual assault.

In 2009, 830 primary victims and 375 secondary victims were served by sexual assault crisis centers throughout North Dakota. “Sexual assault numbers remain steady, but the services provided to victims and the number of contacts made with each victim of sexual assault has increased dramatically,” states Patsy Hall-Hammeren, Sexual Assault Program and Policy Coordinator for NDCAWS/CASAND. “This is due, in part, to the state coalition investing additional resources into assisting communities with sexual assault services.”

In the past year, NDCAWS/CASAND and local crisis centers provided trainings and advanced trainings to many professionals across the state including: advocates, law enforcement, judges, clergy, the media and nurses. Community collaborations are an important aspect of reaching victims of sexual assault and holding perpetrators accountable. According to Ms Hall-Hammeren the effects of sexual assault are devastating and can play out with great intensity. “The trauma can affect all aspects of a victim’s life. It is vital for victims to be believed and supported. No single agency can meet the needs of all victims. Coordination is crucial in assuring that policies and resources are effective in enhancing safety and support to victims of sexual assault.” Thus, many communities across the state are coordinating multi-disciplinary teams to provide rapid, effective and efficient response for sexual assault victims. For more information about these teams or the 2009 statistics please contact Patsy Hall-Hammeren at the state coalition office at 255-6240 ext. 23.

If you have been a victim of sexual assault or know someone who has been assaulted help is available. Please contact 1-800-656-HOPE. Free. Confidential. 24/7

NDCAWS/CASAND encourages media to contact their local domestic violence/sexual assault agencies for a local perspective on these statistics. To locate a program in your community visit [www.ndcaws.org](http://www.ndcaws.org) or call 255-6240.

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### **ND Council on Abused Women’s Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

The ND Council on Abused Women’s Services/Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a membership organization representing the 21 ND domestic violence and sexual assault crisis centers. It is the mission of NDCAWS/CASAND to provide leadership and support in the identification, intervention, and prevention of domestic and sexual violence. For more information, please visit [www.ndcaws.org](http://www.ndcaws.org)