Domestic Violence and Pregnancy
Fact Sheet

- Homicide is the leading cause of death among pregnant women in the United States.¹

- 50-75% of women abused before pregnancy are abused during pregnancy.²

- It is estimated that up to 20% of pregnant women experience violence during their pregnancy, making it more common than gestational diabetes or preeclampsia, conditions routinely screened for in pregnant women by physicians.³

- 77% of pregnant homicide victims are killed early (during the first trimester) in the pregnancy.⁴

- Autopsy reports show that of the 34 deceased pregnant women examined in the District of Columbia between 1988 and 1996, 38% were murdered.⁵

- Women with unintended pregnancies are two to four times more likely to experience physical violence than women with planned pregnancies.⁶

- Women who reported having experienced abuse in their relationship were also more likely to report that their pregnancies were unintended.⁷

- In some cases, unintended pregnancies resulted directly from physical violence that included marital rape.⁸

- Among those women whose pregnancies were intended, 5.3 reported abuse around the time of the pregnancy, compared with 12.6% of whose pregnancy was mistimed and 15.3% whose pregnancy was unwanted.⁹

- Pregnant adolescents (ages 13-17) have an elevated risk of violence from their partners when compared with pregnant adults (ages 18+).¹⁰

- An estimated 5.4%-37.6% of all adolescent girls experience physical violence while pregnant or during the year preceding delivery.¹¹

- Pregnant homicide victims are more likely to be killed with a gun than nonpregnant homicide victims.¹²

- Women who are abused during pregnancy are more likely to delay entry into prenatal care.¹³
• Intimate partner violence during pregnancy is linked to depression, substance abuse, smoking, anemia, first and second trimester bleeding, less than optimal weight gain, and unhealthy eating patterns.14

• Intimate partner violence during pregnancy is associated with a reduction in birth weight.15

• Approximately 72% of U.S. women aged 15-44 years receive at least one reproductive health care service annual.16

• Only 18% of pregnant women examined at an urgent care triage unit reported having been asked by their physician about intimate partner violence.17

• Less than half of health care providers routinely screen for domestic violence or sexual assault18 yet 47% of intimate partner homicide and attempted homicide victims were seen by health care professionals in the year prior to their deaths or attacks.19

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4 Krulewitch, C. et al. pg 7.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
10 Krulewitch, C. et al. pg 8.
12 Krulewitch, C. et al. pg 7.
19 Gazmian, J.A. et al. pg 80.