

POWERED
BY GIVING



PATHWAYS

As the United States grapples with the epidemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism, there is another equally insidious epidemic that often goes unnoticed—domestic violence.

- On average, in the United States, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men. One in four women and one in nine men experience severe intimate partner physical or sexual abuse.
- In Illinois, nearly 38% of women and 26% of men experience intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence or stalking in their lifetimes. When emotional abuse is included in the definition of intimate partner violence, the prevalence is even higher.

“I never imagined that a visit to the Emergency Department could lead to the help I needed. It was not just one issue. To get to a better place, I needed help with my kids, housing, legal issues, a health problem, employment and staying safe.”

—Maria, 2019 Pathways Services Recipient

While these numbers are staggering, domestic violence is one of the most under-reported crimes. Domestic violence occurs among all races and socioeconomic levels. However, for many women of color, economic insecurity and limited education—combined with racism and discrimination—shape how they experience and respond to domestic violence. These challenges also make it more difficult for victims to find help and support services.

The NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) community is not immune to the devastating impact of domestic violence. In 2019, NorthShore had a total of 59 patients who presented in the Emergency Department for treatment or forensics related to sexual assault. NorthShore’s last Community Health Needs Assessment identified violence and safety as weaknesses of the community.

Alarmingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem of domestic violence. With so much of the country’s population under some form of lockdown, domestic violence—a crime committed in private, in people’s homes—has increased. A recent analysis by The Economist of data from five large American cities indicates that although most crime types have decreased during the pandemic, domestic abuse reports have increased.

The time is now for NorthShore to take bold action and tackle this issue head-on. As a community-based healthcare system, NorthShore is uniquely positioned to address the domestic and sexual violence that survivors so often endure in silence.

POWERED BY YOU



BUILDING ON SWEDISH HOSPITAL'S SUCCESS

Swedish Hospital embarked on a Women's Health Initiative to identify and address the needs of women in their community. Elected officials and law enforcement agencies voiced concerns about the growing prevalence of human trafficking in their service area, while community members and participants in the Women's Health Initiative felt that domestic violence and sexual assault were problems in the surrounding areas. In response to these conversations, Pathways (formerly called the Violence Prevention Program) was created in 2015.

Building on Swedish Hospital's lauded work, NorthShore will create a culture of awareness and education to enable staff to better understand, recognize and respond to domestic violence. NorthShore will deepen its capacity to serve its diverse communities and be a place of trust and healing.



A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

The Pathways model has a proven track record. It was developed to strengthen Swedish Hospital's ability to identify and assist victims of violence. The healthcare setting may be one of the only places where victims are free from their abusers and can disclose their abuse. However, disclosure is possible only when a trusting relationship with a caregiver is established. If a medical provider cannot identify the red flags and subtle signs of abuse, the opportunity to help the victim may be lost. Pathways trains providers to identify victims of abuse through patient screenings and then assess their immediate needs. Victims receive comfort care packages, educational resources, and connections with community-based partner agencies that provide vital support services, including safe transport, emergency shelters, legal advocacy and counseling.

By expanding the program to the NorthShore service area, starting with Evanston and Highland Park, NorthShore will strengthen its outreach to those in need and address community concerns about violence and safety. Pathways will train staff, implement system improvements, and provide healthcare and support services that increase safety and reduce isolation for victims.



HOW CAN YOU HELP? WE NEED PRIVATE FUNDING

The estimated cost to bring the program to Evanston and Highland Park Hospitals in Year 1 is \$132,250. Year 1 costs include: salary for staff to implement the program at NorthShore, financial assistance for partner agencies, staff training, patient education materials, phones and safe transport for victims, and other administrative costs. The Year 2 cost is \$144,000. Year 3 is estimated to cost \$246,000 for continuation and rollout to all four legacy NorthShore Hospitals.

Your investment, either outright or pledged over several years, would ensure that this critical program can move forward rapidly. Thank you for your support and consideration of joining this important effort.