



From the Executive Director

New York State's Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) is uniquely positioned as the only executive-level state agency in the nation dedicated to domestic violence. Our office develops programs, launches initiatives and advances public policy to ensure that all communities across New York State have the resources needed in our collective fight against intimate partner violence. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the agency as we embark upon reimagining the services and support for victims and their families. Our goal is to help survivors obtain lives free of intimidation and intimate partner violence. I am determined to raise awareness of this societal ill so we can end the scourge of gender-based violence. Based on my years of experience in this field, I know this is not an easy task, but one we are committed to achieving.



Prior to joining OPDV, I proudly served as Governor Cuomo's Director of Women's Affairs. In that role, I saw first-hand his administration's commitment to improving the lives of women and girls; the deep support of expanding protections for vulnerable populations; and the Cuomo administration's ability to make real change happen. I also had the opportunity to connect with professionals from the myriad systems that impact the lives of victims, survivors and their children. Every day, I worked with individuals who work tirelessly to prevent gender-based violence and make communities safer. I look forward to working even more closely with these professionals in my new role.

Only by working together with advocates throughout the state, can we create a progressive approach that ensures the needs and experiences of victims and survivors remain central to the work we collectively do. To inform this work, OPDV will host **Envision: Transforming the Landscape of Domestic Violence Response in New York State**, a statewide summit for advocates, service providers, health care and legal professionals. The two-day summit, scheduled for July 14-15th at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, will engage professionals from across the state in discussions to develop best practices for implementing survivor-centered services and resources. Please click [here](#) for more information and to register.

NYS is serious about preventing gender-based violence. Under Governor Cuomo's leadership the state has strengthened civil and criminal protections for victims; championed legislation that addresses the deadly connection between firearms and homicide; and invested in programs and services to ensure individuals can access support and assistance, whenever and wherever they need it. His current public policy agenda aims to build upon those and many other accomplishments that have improved the lives of New Yorkers.

I am proud and excited to be an integral part of building the next generation of domestic violence services which will be informed by the current realities of victims' experiences and focused on the changes needed for the delivery of services that address their needs. I look forward to working with you in our joint efforts to make NY the safest state in our nation.

Kelli Owens, Executive Director

OPDV MISSION

To improve New York State's response to and prevention of domestic violence with the goal of enhancing the safety of all New Yorkers in their intimate and family relationships.

OPDV VISION

To create a state in which communities and systems are committed to supporting and promoting equality, dignity and respect so that individuals can feel safer in their intimate and family relationships.

OPDV DUTIES

(as detailed in state Executive Law §575)

- Advise the governor and legislature on policies and practices for the State;
- Train professionals from all disciplines across the state about the intersection of domestic violence in their daily practice;
- Serve as a resource regarding the issue of domestic violence by disseminating regular public awareness campaigns, publishing materials for use by non-profits and victims, distributing local assistance funds, and highlighting best practices in the field.

OPDV Executive Staff

Kelli Owens

Executive Director

Shannon Cantiello

Deputy Executive Director

Ellen Schell

General Counsel

Alicia Borns

Director of Professional Education

Christine Sadowski

Director of External Affairs

Stacey Hamilton

Deputy Director
Office of Campus Safety

2019 Legislative Update

Governor Cuomo signed into law multiple pieces of legislation that will help domestic violence victims and survivors, including:

New Policies and Procedures Required for Hospitals

Every general hospital must have written policies for identifying and treating domestic violence victims, as well as providing referrals for services. New and current employees must be trained on these policies. The state Department of Health will work with OPDV to create a model policy for hospitals to utilize.

Victims' Rights Notice Update

The Victims' Rights Notice included in the state's Domestic Incident Report

(DIR) has been revised to be written in simpler language and printed forms must include the notice in Russian and Chinese, in addition to English and Spanish. The [revised DIR](#) is available on the state Division of Criminal Justice Services' [website](#) and future DIRs sent to police agencies by DCJS will include the revised Domestic Violence Victim Rights Notice in English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. The [revised notice](#) also is available online in those four languages as well as Haitian Creole, Bengali and Korean.

DV Training for Appearance Enhancement Professionals

Effective June 17, 2020, anyone seeking a license for natural hair styling, esthetics, nail specialty,

cosmetology, or any appearance enhancement business must complete domestic violence and sexual assault training. The Department of State (DOS), which licenses these professionals, will work with OPDV and a domestic violence advocacy organization to develop the online training. DOS also will notify individuals seeking to renew their licenses that the training is available, but not required. This training will build upon OPDV's ["I Am ABLÉ" campaign](#), which illustrates how these professionals can broach the subject if they are concerned that a client may be in an abusive relationship.

Review all the [Legislative Changes](#) enacted in 2019.

OPDV Partners with Teen Vogue to Address Dating Abuse

Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year. Research also indicates that 33 percent of adolescents in the United States are victims of sexual, physical, verbal or emotional abuse. Only a fraction of those individuals will report the abuse or seek help.

These facts and figures shed light on the prevalence of dating abuse among teens and young adults nationally. While helpful, they don't provide specific NYS data nor do they offer insight into what teens and young adults know about the issue; how they are getting information about healthy relationships; and if they know what to do if they are victims of abuse.

To address this information gap, OPDV is partnering with Teen Vogue to develop tools and resources that provide teens with a safe space to get information and when necessary, help.

Over the next year, OPDV will facilitate focus groups across the state to talk to teens about relationships, abuse, and where they are getting their

information. The goal is to identify how they are learning and talking about dating, abuse and consent. How do they learn to negotiate things in their relationships? Where are they getting their messaging from?

These focus groups will offer teens and young adults a forum to be used to inform future decisions that affect them. They will provide OPDV with information and insight that will be utilized to develop and implement effective awareness campaigns and policies that positively impact the lives of teens and young adults. This project aims to bridge the knowledge gap between teens and young adults and the professionals who serve them.

This initiative also complements other work OPDV will undertake this year. As part of Governor Cuomo's Women's Agenda, the agency is tasked with developing and implementing a training and technical assistance program to address dating abuse among at-risk children and teens. The training will target staff who work with children and teens

For more information about the partnership, check out this *Teen Vogue* op-ed by OPDV Executive Director Kelli Owens:

[New York State Wants Young People's Help to Stop Teen Dating Violence](#)

in the care of the state's Office of Children and Family Services and will aim to ensure that at-risk youth who are already experiencing difficulties in their lives are receiving the services and support that they need.

OPDV will collaborate with national advocacy organizations and social media personalities and influencers on the "Every Body Loved" campaign to promote body positivity. When teens have a healthy body image and self-esteem, they are more likely to be in healthy and stable relationships.

Additional information about these initiatives, including the schedule of statewide focus groups, will be available within the coming weeks.

Please send any comments or content ideas to: opdvbulletin@opdv.ny.gov

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New York State Women's Agenda 2020

Governor's Domestic Violence Task Force

Protecting victims and survivors of domestic violence and improving access to services have consistently been a part of Governor Cuomo's agenda and OPDV has a key role in implementing his vision.

Among other initiatives this year, the agency will work with state and local partners to:

- Develop a survivor-centered model to domestic violence service provision that is based on victims' needs and experiences, and that holds abusers accountable and decreases their levels of lethality; and
- Create Domestic Violence Regional Councils that will work with the State's Domestic Violence Advisory Council to address the needs of survivors, domestic violence programs and communities.

These initiatives are a direct result of recommendations made by the state's Domestic Violence Task Force and endorsed by Governor Cuomo. Convened last year by the Governor, the Task Force analyzed issues raised by service providers and survivors during a statewide listening tour that also occurred in 2019.

Among the goals OPDV aims to address through this work are: removing the long-term housing barriers faced by victims of domestic violence; identifying specialized resources and services that will allow victims to safely remain in their existing housing and/or community; and reducing the burden on service providers resulting from state funding and reporting requirements.

The New York State Council on Women and Girls

The [New York State Council on Women and Girls](#) ensures that every future policy and program enacted in the state considers the rights of women and girls. State agency commissioners and leaders sit on the Council, which is advised by a steering committee representing women from academia, business, media and the nonprofit/advocacy community; and which is tasked with addressing nine areas that particularly impact the lives of women and girls: Education, Economic Opportunity, Workforce Equity, Leadership, Health Care, Child Care, Safety, STEM, and Intersectionality. The Council also recently convened a Women's Financial Services subcommittee to address the representation and advancement of women in the financial services industry and to identify the hurdles and obstacles to increasing the number and diversity of women in leadership roles in this industry.

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York State has taken significant legislative and executive actions to implement Council priorities by: passing the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, the Reproductive Rights Act and the Comprehensive Contraceptive Coverage Act; removing gaps in the Rape Shield Law and expanding the statute of limitations for rape; outlawing revenge pornography; extending Human Rights Law protections to all public school students statewide; modernizing New York's Pay Equity Law; improving access to in-vitro fertilization and fertility preservation coverage; reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and racial disparities and promoting rural telepath services for perinatal care; ensuring that breastfeeding is respected in the workplace; increasing protections against harassment in the workplace; launching the Family Empowerment Community College Pilot Program; expanding the Empire State Afterschool Program; and continuing to invest in computer science education through Smart Start.

Implementation is currently underway on additional Council initiatives including the launch of Healthy Relationships education in middle and high schools, the Uterine Fibroids and Endometriosis Research and Public Outreach campaign, the statewide [Safe Sleep Campaign](#) to prevent infant deaths, the [If You Can See It, You Can Be It program](#), continuation of the [Know Your Rights, Get the Facts campaign](#), the implementation of the Task Force on Representation and Corporate Transparency to Shine the Light on New York Values, the State's first ever Youth Council, and efforts to ensure that State Boards are representative of New York State.

Women's Agenda Priorities

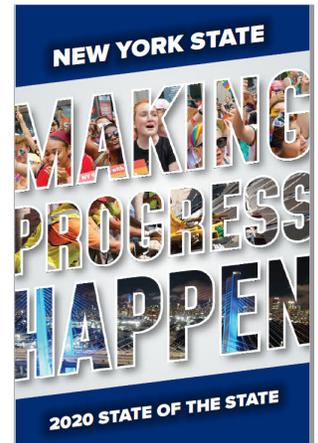
The New York State Women's Agenda creates opportunities by breaking down barriers so that women and girls can continue to experience equality across all areas of life, including work, health, safety, education, and family.

2020 priorities include:

- **Modernizing Support to Domestic Violence Victims:** pilot project to develop survivor-centered services and updated service delivery approaches.
- **Stopping Reproductive Coercion:** establish partnerships between domestic violence agencies and sexual and reproductive health clinics to increase awareness of, and response to, sexual abuse and sexual and reproductive coercion.
- **Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence Victims Seeking a Divorce:** require courts to specifically consider the effects of domestic violence on the future financial circumstances of each party.
- **Protecting Domestic Violence Victims from Gun Violence:** propose specific firearms measures to protect victims of domestic violence.
- **Requiring Uniform, High-Quality Care Standards for all Sexual Assault Survivors:** require all hospitals to adhere to the same high-quality, victim-centered care standards when treating sexual assault survivors.
- **Requiring Sexual Harassment Data Disclosure from State Contractors:** all potential state contractors must report the number of adverse judgments, adverse administrative rulings, and settlements relating to sexual harassment within the past year.

Additional 2020 priorities:

- Passing First-in-the-Nation Inclusive Equal Rights Amendment
- Creating a Women's Corporate Leadership Academy
- Investing in Women Entrepreneurs
- Improving Representation for Women on Corporate Boards
- Ensuring Pay Equity at State and Local Authorities
- Banning the "Pink" Tax
- Addressing the Student Loan Debt Crisis' Impact on Women of Color
- Comprehensive Plan to Address Maternal Mortality
- Expanding Access to Fertility Services



Click image above for full list of 2020 State of the State proposals

New External Affairs Director Joins OPDV



OPDV has recently created a new Bureau of External Affairs to enhance the agency's proficiency

in the areas of training, policy and practice related to domestic violence in New York State. We are fortunate to welcome Bureau Director Christine Sadowski, whose decades of leadership in New York State women's organizations will help shape the ambitious proposals Governor Cuomo laid out in his 2020 State of the State proposals.

Sadowski's wealth of knowledge and experience leading the YWCA Orange County through a complete reorganization to ensure that the mission of eliminating

racism and empowering women was embedded in every aspect of operations and programs will benefit OPDV's reimagining of domestic violence service provision. Her experience working with a variety of women's membership and cultural equity organizations including the Leadership Conference of Christians and Jews, the Anti-Defamation League, the Junior Leagues International, and The National Assembly of Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, in addition to numerous corporations and school districts will ensure that OPDV's mission and message maintain a racial justice lens as we work to deepen our partnerships with programs statewide.

Ms. Sadowski was a member of Orange County's Human Rights

Commission for 12 years, serving as Chair of the Commission for 4 of those years, and is a past Chair of the local Chamber's Minority and Women Business Committee. Most recently, she represented the YWCAs of New York State on the Women's Equality Agenda and has served on multiple statewide women's rights and racial justice coalitions while lecturing widely and authoring publications on gender equity.