

# EFFICACY OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER MODEL

The investigation and intervention of child abuse, especially child sexual abuse, is very challenging for the children, families, and responding professionals. Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) coordinate the multidisciplinary response to these allegations in a child-friendly setting where the needs of the child are the primary concern. Within this single setting, the combined resources and expertise of child protective services (CPS), law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, forensic interviewers, mental health, and medical professionals collaborate to limit any additional trauma to the child and family, while also assuring a quality and competent investigation and intervention which leads to healing and hope.

## WHY IS THIS WORK SO IMPORTANT?



### ANNUAL MEDICAL COSTS FOR SURVIVORS<sup>1</sup>

SEXUAL ABUSE	16%	<b>MORE</b>
PHYSICAL ABUSE	22%	
BOTH TYPES OF ABUSE	36%	

### ECONOMIC IMPACT:

Child sexual abuse survivors were significantly less likely to own:



NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING (NSCAW) 1990-2000<sup>3</sup>

**\$2635** MORE PER YEAR HEALTH EXPENSES



PSYCHIATRIC CARE  
INPATIENT HOSPITAL  
OUTPATIENT (PHYSICIAN AND CLINIC)  
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS  
TARGETED CASE MANAGEMENT

PER YEAR EARNINGS  
COMPARED TO A  
NON-ABUSED PERSON

**<\$8000**

Women abused in childhood appear to have 3:1 greater long-term economic impacts than men who were abused in childhood.<sup>2</sup>



## WHY ARE CACs AND MDTs SO IMPORTANT?

### COORDINATED SERVICES<sup>4</sup>

CAC communities demonstrated significantly higher rates of:

- Coordinated investigations between law enforcement and CPS
- Team forensic interviews
- Case reviews
- Recording of forensic interviews
- Interviews in child-friendly settings



### PROSECUTION RATES<sup>6</sup>

Use of the CAC approach leads to a dramatic increase in felony prosecutions of child sexual abuse:

- District with significant CAC usage – 196% increase
- District with limited CAC usage – 1% decrease

### CASE PROCESSING TIME<sup>8</sup>

Faster criminal charging decisions in child sexual abuse cases:



### ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE<sup>5</sup>

Children served at CAC were much more likely to receive forensic medical exams:

- No penetration in abuse disclosure: 4.0 times more likely
- Penetration in abuse disclosure: 1.5 times more likely



### CLIENT SATISFACTION<sup>7</sup>

Caregivers whose children were seen at the CAC:

- Higher rates of satisfaction than caregivers whose children were seen at the comparison sites
- Significantly more satisfied with the experience than caregivers from the comparison samples



Children who were seen at the CAC:

- More significantly described themselves as "not at all" or "not very" scared versus kids from the comparison communities

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