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Media Release | YWCA Canada

Violence against women is a national shame: now it must become a national priority

Ottawa, June 1, 2006. YWCA Canada releases a national study that indicates an alarmingly high percentage of women coming to shelters are at risk of being murdered. Of the 368 women interviewed at ten research sites across Canada, 77 percent were at extreme or severe risk of homicide.

“The general public has little understanding of the fear and degradation commonly experienced by women abused by their intimate partners”, explains researcher Professor Leslie Tutty, “it is an ongoing secret terrorism for these women.”

The women who seek shelter have made many attempts to stop the abuse, but they cannot control the abuser's actions. When they have exhausted their resources and are most vulnerable, shelters provide safety.

The women in the study indicate that shelters are the most effective support available to them; but it is not enough.

“We know shelters save lives in the short-term but we want to stop violence in the long-term”, says YWCA CEO, Paulette Senior. “Shelter stays are, on average, between 14 and 21 days, a very short time to turn a life around.”

The study has 14 recommendations that go beyond the shelter walls. These include comprehensive social supports like affordable housing, employment/income support, and comprehensive community collaborations.

Meeting with Canadian legislators and policy makers in Ottawa today, advocates from across the country are calling for change.

Senior concludes, “Violence against women is an equality issue. If we don't offer women the essential supports they require to be safe, we, as Canadians, are responsible for putting their lives at risk.”

Full report and related materials will be available on the YWCA website: www.ywca.ca.

About the YWCA:

Today YWCA is one of the largest multi-service agencies in Canada, reaching out to over one million women, girls, and their families. Approximately 20,000 of them come for services related to the violence they have experienced in their lives. Close to 6,000 utilize YWCA emergency violence against women shelter services each year. Twenty-four YWCAs offer housing programs that provide a range of services and house over 30,000 people annually across Canada.

- 30 -

For further information and interview bookings:

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