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New Nationwide Survey Shows Demand for Domestic Violence Services Up Sharply In a Down Economy

Sacramento, May 3, 2012—A new survey released Monday by the Mary Kay Foundation shows that the persistent economic downturn has had a serious impact on domestic violence shelters. The “Mary Kay Truth About Abuse Survey” reveals that not only have shelters seen an increase in the number of domestic violence survivors seeking help nationwide, but the abuse is more severe and victims are staying in shelters for longer periods of time. The increased need for services is taking place at a time when many shelters have seen a decrease in funding, forcing many programs to scale back services or even close their doors.

The fourth “Mary Kay Truth About Abuse Survey” polled more than 730 domestic violence shelter programs across the United States about domestic violence and the economy since 2008. This latest survey contains alarming statistics that shed light on the connection between domestic violence and the economic downturn. Among the most disturbing trends:

- **78 percent** of domestic violence shelters nationwide (nearly eight out of ten) report an increase in women seeking assistance from abuse.
- **74 percent** of survivors stayed with an abusive partner longer because of financial issues.
- **92 percent** of shelters had to end or scale back specific programs and services.

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership), a statewide coalition of domestic violence programs and shelters, has long recognized the connection between a down economy and the subsequent increase in victims seeking help. While economic hardship does not cause domestic violence, external stressors can increase the severity and frequency of violent incidents, leading to an increased demand for services.

Tara Shabazz, Partnership Executive Director, said “Our member programs have continued to see an increase in women and children needing shelter, especially since the recession began in 2008. Many shelters have also noticed that when the economy suffers, private donations dry up. Now more than ever, we must ensure that the State supports us in protecting victims and their children.”

Download the “Mary Kay Truth About Abuse Survey”

Access the [detailed national findings](#) of the 2012 “Mary Kay Truth About Abuse Survey.”

About the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence is California’s statewide domestic violence coalition, with organizational and individual members across California. Working at the local, state and national

levels for nearly 30 years, the Partnership has a long track record of successfully passing over 100 pieces of legislation on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children. As the unified voice for California's domestic violence agencies, the Partnership provides statewide leadership on public policy issues, offers professional training and services to domestic violence service providers and promotes public awareness through community outreach efforts. With offices in Sacramento, the Partnership's member programs span the entire state.

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