

ORIGINAL

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REMARKS

BY

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OF THE

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

PRESENTED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY THE
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS

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PETER LISAGOR ROOM, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE WITH DR. KLEIN AT THIS IMPORTANT PRESS CONFERENCE.

THREE YEARS AGO, I HELD A "SURGEON GENERAL'S WORKSHOP ON VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC HEALTH" AND I WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE DR. LUELLE KLEIN TAKE CHARGE OF THE SESSIONS ON SPOUSE ABUSE.

SHE WAS THEN -- AND SHE REMAINS TODAY -- A VALUED COLLEAGUE AND A STRONG ALLY IN OUR NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE FROM THE HOMES OF AMERICA.

OF THE MANY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAME FROM THAT WORKSHOP,
TWO WERE DIRECTED SQUARELY AT US:

ONE RECOMMENDATION URGED THE SURGEON GENERAL TO DO WHATEVER
HE COULD TO INFORM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OF THE EPIDEMIC OF
VIOLENCE THAT INFECTS OVER A MILLION HOMES EVERY YEAR.

AND A SECOND, MORE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION URGED THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION -- AND OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS IN
PARTICULAR -- TO DO WHATEVER THEY COULD DO TO STOP THE
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, PREGNANT WOMEN, AND INFANTS.

TODAY, DR. KLEIN AND I -- AND THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS AND THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE -- ARE KEEPING FAITH WITH THE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THAT WORKSHOP ... AND WE'RE ALSO KEEPING FAITH WITH THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.

THEY ARE A POPULATION AT RISK, I AM SORRY TO REPORT. AS MANY AS 15 MILLION ADULT WOMEN HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF BATTERING, RAPE, AND OTHER FORMS OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT. EACH YEAR, A MILLION OR MORE WOMEN ARE ADDED TO THAT TOTAL.

IT'S AN OVERWHELMING MORAL, ECONOMIC, AND PUBLIC HEALTH BURDEN THAT OUR SOCIETY CAN NO LONGER BEAR. IN THIS COUNTRY, NO MAN HAS A LICENSE TO BEAT ... AND GET AWAY WITH IT. AND NO WOMAN IS OBLIGED TO ACCEPT A BEATING ... AND SUFFER BECAUSE OF IT.

HELP IS AVAILABLE FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE COURTS ... FROM COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS LOCAL AND STATE ALLIANCES AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ... AND FROM MEDICINE, AS WE WILL LEARN AGAIN TODAY FROM THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS.

THIS, THEN, IS MY MESSAGE TO THE WOMEN AND MEN OF AMERICA:

WE SAY WE ARE A CIVILIZED SOCIETY. ALL RIGHT, LET'S ACT
LIKE ONE, AND LET'S STOP THE VIOLENCE IN OUR FAMILIES.
LET'S END THE BATTERING OF THE WOMEN OF THIS COUNTRY.

THANK YOU.

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