



October 2, 2008

CCASA Position Paper Regarding the CCADV Expansion Task Force

There has been a great deal of discussion over the last month about the relationship between CCASA and CCADV, including information regarding the newly formed CCADV Expansion Task Force. We at CCASA would like to clear up any confusion that you may be hearing.

CCASA was without staff from February 2008 to June 2008. At that time, the CCASA Board of Directors was exploring a number of options for the organization. One of those options was to discuss the possibility of merging services with CCADV. This was not the only option that was discussed, nor was it decided upon as a final solution for CCASA. The CCASA Board of Directors took this option, along with some others, to a membership meeting in February to discuss them with CCASA members. CCADV representatives were invited to that meeting. During that meeting, the CCASA Board of Directors received feedback from members opposing such a merger. Members were very concerned that sexual assault services would not receive adequate attention if the two agencies merged.

At that time, the discussion was closed from CCASA's perspective, as the Board of Directors sought to reorganize the agency in response to member feedback. The Board of Directors began to move forward with an Executive Director job search. A number of candidates were interviewed and the final candidate, Meg Allen, was offered the position and accepted in June. The membership coordinator, Lauren Croucher, was hired by the new Executive Director shortly afterward.

Throughout this time, the CCADV staff and board of directors chose to organize a group of individuals to discuss the possibility of a merger, without input from the CCASA Board of Directors or new staff. The CCASA Board of Directors was unaware of this group and was not invited to participate. Eventually, the new CCASA staff was made aware of the Expansion Task Force meetings through concerned community members, although they had not been invited to participate in these discussions.

On August 18, 2008, CCASA staff was invited by the CCADV Executive Director participate in the Task Force to discuss options for CCADV to expand its mission to include sexual assault. CCASA declined the offer to participate based on the feedback from our membership that had shown clear opposition to such an expansion of one coalition or merger of the two. We have been and are continuing to work hard to rebuild the coalition and our services. It would not have been appropriate to support the expansion when our mission stands to serve sexual assault survivors, and CCADV's mission stands to support domestic violence survivors. Although these mission statements are not wholly exclusive, CCASA's Board of Directors, staff and members feel that they are distinct and that the distinctions are not only important, but crucial.

CCADV has stated that they initiated this Expansion Task Force at the request of CCASA and our Board of Directors. The CCASA Board of Directors did not request an Expansion Task Force, did not request for CCADV to expand its mission to include sexual violence and does not support this initiative. That decision is based on clear feedback from by CCASA members. The original conversation was held to discuss the best options for the future of CCASA, and a merger option was simply a suggestion between the two Boards back in February. The Boards had agreed to each form a Task Force to explore this option, only if their members were supportive of the idea. It was discarded by the CCASA Board after presenting it to membership and receiving a strong opposition to the idea, but CCADV chose to move forward with their task force.

We are excited about rebuilding the coalition and have received so much support from our members, funders and allies in the movement. We need to focus our time on developing new services, trainings and benefits for our members. We believe that CCADV has accomplished great things in the past through their focus on survivors of domestic violence and we support them in continuing to focus their efforts on that mission. CCADV and CCASA have enjoyed a collaborative relationship in the past, working to support one another as well as the many dual services agencies throughout Colorado. We are very supportive of continuing this relationship. In the past, there have been dual trainings and other events where the coalitions have worked together for the benefit of dual members and the many survivors, while maintaining their respective expertise and specialized services.

The current CCASA Board of Directors and staff would like to clear up any misunderstanding regarding their position in this matter. At no time since our membership made their position clear, have we considered merging the two coalitions. In addition, we have never considered supporting an expansion of CCADV's mission to include sexual assault. **We need to emphatically emphasize that no members of CCASA's staff or Board of Directors are interested in or are supportive of this expansion.** Such a movement is clearly not applicable to the current situation. CCASA membership is growing and we are looking forward to a strong future.

CCASA staff has successfully initiated the first round of membership meetings since 2007. Our first meeting in Durango was a great opportunity for current members, former members and community members at large to interact and discuss the future of CCASA. Additional meetings will be held in November, with a special training on offender tactics at UNC-Greeley. CCASA is launching a new training program with in-person trainings, online webinars and other interactive events for our members and the public, with a focus on increasing services and availability of resources to rural areas. We have been releasing monthly news briefs and legislative updates. We developed and launched a new logo. We have increased outreach at public events and attendance at important community meetings and gatherings. We are growing in membership numbers weekly and have launched our monthly committee meetings.

CCASA is, as always, moving to fill the gap in services for sexual assault survivors and program providers. This has been our mission since 1984 and we will continue to faithfully serve it.

If you have any questions, thoughts or items that you are unclear on, please contact us directly. We are very interested in your input about this situation, hearing about your needs regarding sexual assault services, and sharing our bright future with you.

Thank you for your support,

CCASA Board and Staff