The Rape Prevention Education (RPE) program is a federally funded program with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) supporting efforts in all 50 states. The goal of the RPE program is to reduce the statewide incidence of sexual violence through primary prevention efforts to change attitudes and behaviors of those who are most at risk to perpetrate violence against others.

The Montana RPE program is led by the Sexual Violence Prevention and Victim Services (SVPVS) program within the Adolescent Health Section at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MT DPHHS). SVPVS currently funds 12 subrecipients and 28 middle schools across Montana which are implementing primary prevention activities to reduce sexual violence.

In July 2020, MT DPHHS contracted with University of Montana researchers based at the Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development (CCFWD) to evaluate the RPE Program. The evaluation includes the analysis of data from local, state, and national data sources. The evaluation will include interviews, surveys, and needs assessments conducted across the state of Montana over the next three years.

**Evaluation Questions**

The CDC requires that all states answer the following questions through their evaluation:

1. To what extent has the state built or enhanced partnerships for sexual violence prevention?

2. To what extent has the recipient used data to select and prioritize the sub-recipients, the prevention strategies and approaches, and the population of focus?

3. To what extent have targeted risk and protective factors for sexual violence outcomes changed at the state level?

4. To what extent have selected prevention strategies been implemented in the state?

5. Which factors are critical for implementing selected prevention strategies and approaches?
Sexual Violence in Montana

- In 2019, there were 624 reported rapes in Montana and a state rate of 58.4 per 100,000 residents [1], higher than the US rate of 42.6 per 100,000 [2].
- Nationally, American Indian women are 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to all other races/ethnicities [3].

Results from the 2019 MT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) demonstrate the following:

- One-third (33.1%) of Montana adults believe that women making false reports of sexual assault or harassment is a major problem, 40.9% believe this is a minor problem and 14.4% stated that this is not a problem.
- The majority (66.7%) of Montanans disagree with the statement that violence between dating partners is a personal matter and that people should not interfere. Only 9.9% of adults in Montana somewhat or strongly agreed with this assertion [4].

According to the 2017 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey (PRAMS):

- 3% of Montana women reported experiencing sexual or domestic violence at the hands of their intimate partner in the 12 months prior to their pregnancy.
- An estimated 2.2% of Montana mothers reported experiencing intimate partner violence during their pregnancy [5].

Data Sources
The RPE evaluation includes the analysis and reporting of findings from data sources such as:

- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey
- College Campus Climate Surveys
- Montana Board of Crime Control
- National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

References