

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

To: All House Members

From: Representative Mary Isaacson

Date: December 7, 2020

Subject: COVID-19: Domestic Violence Reporting

Beginning in March of this year, personal movement was limited throughout the country, lessening the spread of COVID-19, but also potentially increasing the possibility of domestic violence. With an estimated one in four women and one in ten men experiencing intimate partner violence and instances of all types of family violence being shown to increase following natural disasters and other crises, the lack of uniformity in data collected by hospitals on these incidents is concerning. While hospitals are required to report domestic abuse to the police, most do not internally track domestic abuse cases that come through the emergency room or during routine doctor visits, and if they do track them, they are not widely shared with a local or state source. In fact, the only state that requires such tracking is Tennessee.

My legislation aims to fix this issue by requiring hospitals to track statistics regarding suspected domestic violence cases, similarly to what Tennessee currently requires. Hospitals would then need to report their findings to the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. These reports would contain no personally identifying information and would create a new resource for state and local entities looking to help domestic violence survivors.

As elected officials, we must continue to work towards ensuring a safer Pennsylvania for all. Please join me in supporting this important legislation.