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## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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### UHS observes domestic violence day, launches prevention initiative

AMHERST, Mass. – University Health Services (UHS) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is joining healthcare organizations nationwide in marking Health Cares about Domestic Violence Day, Wednesday, Oct. 8.

Organized by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the event began 10 years ago as a way to educate providers about the importance of assessing for domestic violence and the long-term health implications of exposure to violence.

UHS medical and mental health providers, health educators and others are using the observance to launch a new task force focused on violence within the campus community. The team will address assessment and screenings; access to campus and community resources; referral processes; intervention strategies; and education.

Violence directed at an intimate partner, child, roommate or housemate is an issue across the country and on campus. According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, 25% of women and 8% of men have been physically assaulted and/or raped by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner or date in their lifetime. A UMass Amherst survey conducted in 2000 found roughly 6% of students living in residence halls reported being the victim of roommate violence.

"Healthcare providers are in an ideal position to help domestic violence victims who seek routine or emergency care," noted UHS health educator Tom Schiff, Ed.D., coordinator of the initiative. "Screenings, referrals and education can make an enormous difference – and even save lives."

UHS, UMass Amherst's fully accredited health center, serves students, faculty and staff. The center offers comprehensive care, referral and education services, with a special focus on the health needs and concerns of students. For more information, visit [www.umass.edu/uhs](http://www.umass.edu/uhs), or call (413) 577-5000.

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### **INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY**

- Tom Schiff, Ed.D., UHS health educator