



THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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Teen Dating Violence

Help is out there for girls and boys in abusive relationships

Yashawnee Vaughn's tragic disappearance set hearts beating anxiously across the city. Now police say that the lovely 14-year-old with the smile that wouldn't quit is dead. And another teen, 16-year-old Parrish Bennette, awaits trial in the juvenile detention center charged with manslaughter. He has pleaded innocent. Yashawnee's grief-stricken family and friends are still waiting for her body to be recovered.

We don't know what happened to Yashawnee Vaughn, and we don't know whether Parrish Bennette bears any responsibility. However, the tragedy is touching students and parents in a very personal way, and it is raising all kinds of questions and concerns about teen violence.

To answer some of those questions, which may be quite unrelated to Vaughn's sad story, The Skanner News decided to take a look at teen dating violence.

What's The Problem?

"Nationally the statistics show that one in four women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime," says Vanessa Timmins, a domestic violence specialist with Multnomah County. "And the figures show there is a greater risk for young people."

In fact, girls aged 16-24 are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence than any other age group.

"They are so new to relationships that they don't have a road map of what a healthy relationship feels like," Timmins says.

The Love is Respect study also found that 40 percent students aged 11-12 report that their friends are victims of verbal abuse in relationships.

One-in-five students aged 13-14 say their friends are victims of dating violence, such as getting struck, hit or slapped by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Only 51 percent of tweens (aged about 9-

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VAUGHN VIGIL



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

Last Saturday's vigil for Yashawnee Vaughn. From left, Swehsac Vaughn, Yashawnee's aunt (in green shirt); mother Shaquita Louis; brother Cedrell Washington; and cousin André Montgomery (in profile with red hat) listen to testimony of friends and search and rescue volunteers.

Race-Based Health Differences Remain

VA study shows equality in care doesn't eliminate disparities

In the past decade, the Veterans Affairs Health Care System has made great progress in providing screenings and treating high-risk conditions for all its patients, thus substantially closing the gaps in care provided white and African American enrollees.

However, a new study shows that big differences still persist between black and white veterans when it comes to outcomes in heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension.

The research appears in the

April 2011 edition of the monthly journal Health Affairs. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy focused solely on health and health care, sponsored the issue.

The study examined a national sample of more than 1.2 million VA enrollees between 2000 and 2009 for 10 clinical performance measures related to cancer screening and cardiovascular and diabetes care. The authors of the study say that, while the VA greatly improved

the quality of care for white and black veterans over that period, those efforts have not narrowed racial gaps in clinical outcomes.

"The VA has narrowed care gaps that are directly under the control of the providers - ordering tests, referring to the appropriate specialist, and conducting screenings," says Amal Trivedi, research investigator at the Providence VA Medical Center and an assistant professor at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. However, among all VA medical centers,

there was as much as a nine percentage point difference between black and white veterans in measures indicating whether cholesterol, diabetes, and blood pressure were under control. Thus, improvements in clinical performance were not accompanied by meaningful reductions in racial disparities for outcomes that not only affect how healthy people are and how long they live, but also significantly drive up health costs.

The bottom line, says Trivedi,

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Washington May Cut Prison System

Budget limits may crush tough-on-crime laws from past years

Nicholas K Geranios
The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) Like many states, cash-strapped Washington is looking to save money by reducing the size of its prison population.

But the state has actually been releasing non-violent offenders for years, leaving relatively few inmates who would be good

candidates for early release. Washington has only about 17,000 prison inmates, well below the average for a state of 6.6 million.

"Over the last 10 years we have moved away from incarcerating in any great numbers people who don't deserve to be in prison," said Tom McBride, a spokesman for the state Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

That is not the case in all states. Huge

budget deficits are causing politicians in many states to take a hard look at prisons, and the tough-on-crime laws that locked up more people for longer periods. At least two dozen states are considering early release of inmates to save money. Tougher sentencing laws have contributed to a fourfold increase in prison costs across the nation over two

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