

The Impact of Family Violence

Violence in families can have significant long-term negative impacts on all family members, including health problems, lower productivity at school or work, lifelong developmental problems in children, increased likelihood for emotional and behavioral disorders, and family relationship problems that can last for generations. Thus, family violence must always be a concern to the Army and the broader community, as well-functioning families are vital to mission readiness.

How Does the Army Address Family Violence?

The Army Family Advocacy Program (FAP) provides services and personnel to prevent and treat child maltreatment (CM) and intimate partner violence (IPV). The Army Community Service (ACS) FAP focuses on prevention by providing programs and services such as commanders' briefings, troop trainings, prevention campaigns, and classes to improve the quality of life of Army service members and their families.

The Hypothetical Successful Prevention of CM and IPV

Department of Defense policy requires the military services to evaluate the impact of family readiness programs. In 2015, the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management and the Army Installation Management Command sponsored an independent, impartial economic assessment of the Army Community Service's Family Advocacy Program. For more information, or to request the full report, please contact the Clearinghouse (see contact information below).

There is currently no evidence that ACS FAP efforts are effective in achieving its outcomes (i.e., a reduction in risk factors and an increase in protective factors that lead to reduced rates of CM and IPV). Therefore, a **hypothetical** cost-benefit assessment was conducted to measure the possible economic return from effective prevention efforts for ACS FAP.

The economic savings resulting from the prevention of CM and IPV would occur across many service sectors, including healthcare, mental health services, child welfare services, criminal justice, special education needs, and lost productivity in future education and employment.

The potential lifetime average savings from one prevented case of CM is \$235,402 (in 2015 dollars).

- Based on a 5% rate of CM, the annual costs of CM among the Army population could exceed \$75 million, while the total lifetime costs could exceed \$4.4 billion.

With \$46 million being spent on ACS FAP in 2015, any reduction in CM and IPV would provide an economic return that may cover a substantial percentage of program costs (see Figure 1).

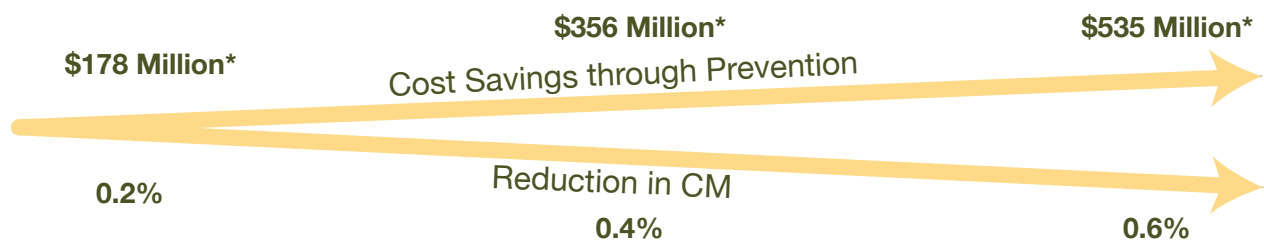
For instance:

- \$178 million in aggregate costs would be saved in the short and long term across the service sectors, **assuming** a 0.2% decline in overall rate of Army CM cases from effective prevention.
- An average reduction of five incidents of IPV in any given year would represent an economic savings of roughly \$17 million—over a third of the cost of ACS FAP for a given year.

Takeaways

- A **hypothetical** cost-benefit assessment can measure the possible economic return of effective prevention efforts for ACS FAP.
- Any reduction in CM and IPV would provide an economic return that may cover a substantial percentage of program costs.
- Given the costly behaviors that FAP aims to reduce, there is great potential for an economic return from successful programming.

Figure 1: Hypothetical Societal Savings by Reduction of CM



**Without program evaluation data indicating specific time parameters for measured program effects (i.e., reduction in CM), the exact period of time during which the hypothesized reductions in CM may occur cannot be determined*

Recommendations for Program Improvement & Evaluation

- 1 Conduct a rigorous process and outcome evaluation of ACS FAP and its sub-programs.
- 2 Ensure psychoeducation programs and classes have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness; replace those without evidence with a minimum of evidence-informed programs.
- 3 Implement additional marketing recruitment efforts (e.g., social norms campaign).
- 4 Conduct a comprehensive review of administrative data of service utilization to identify patterns and resource requirements for different ACS FAP services.
- 5 Conduct an overhaul of the client tracking system (CTS) to improve the system comprehensiveness and utility in tracking process and outcome data related to ACS FAP and its sub-programs.

Key Messages



The **hypothetical** projections in this economic assessment are purposefully conservative. The potential impact of other outcomes not considered would likely lead to additional economic benefits and increased savings beyond those presented here.



Rigorous program evaluation is needed to determine if potential cost savings exist for the Army and civilian community.



Because the stakes are so high, addressing CM and IPV is critical to preventing further violence and reversing long-term negative impacts (i.e., an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure). Better functioning families generate economic benefits through increased productivity at school, and in the workforce.