**Minnesota “Clean Hotels” Initiative**

We imagine a society where every individual can grow to their full potential. The social environment can support that growth. This is a collaborative initiative between the Minnesota Department of Health’s Sexual Violence Prevention Program and the Minnesota Men’s Action Network: Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence. We are joining others in their historical efforts to create and nurture communities that are safe, just, and equitable.

**What is the Concern?**

Sexual exploitation of women and children has become mainstreamed. Material once regulated through zoning restrictions (“adult book stores”) is now available at gas stations, mainstream bookstores and hotels. This pornography initiative is one effort to create safe and healthy communities by curbing the mainstreaming of sexually violent and degrading material. For our purposes **pornography is defined as “sexually explicit material that objectifies and exploits its subjects (predominantly women and children) while eroticizing domination, degradation, and/or violence.”** [[1]](#footnote-1)

**Call for Action**:

We are asking that business, public/private organizations, and municipalities modify their **meeting facility policy** to clarify that meetings and conferences will be held in facilities that do not offer in-room adult pay-per-view pornography, and that **travel policies** be amended to reimburse employees’ lodging costs only when staying at hotels that do not offer in-room adult pay-per-view pornography. We have created a model policy that can be easily adapted for these purposes.

In this way we collectively remove our support for the mainstreaming of this sexually violent material and begin changing the environment which supports violence against women, girls and boys.

**Why this Initiative?**

This is a relatively easy and accessible primary prevention strategy to begin changing the environment in which so much sexual and domestic violence occurs.[[2]](#footnote-2) This initiative allows people and institutions an opportunity to divest themselves officially from sexually violent material and by doing so contribute to a national primary prevention effort to stop sexual and domestic violence before it starts.

**Why Pornography?**

Pornography has become increasingly violent. Use of, and dependence upon, violent pornography is associated with higher rates of sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation. Prolonged exposure to pornography (and specifically violent pornography) results in a “loss-of-respect” for female sexual autonomy and in greater risk of expression of aggression against women.

Pornography exposure also appears to negatively influence the welfare of women in everyday, nonsexual circumstances. Repeated-exposure to pornography fosters the acceptance of the notion that women are subservient to men and promotes an adversarial, distrustful relationship between the sexes.

**How you can help:** In collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health, we created several documents that can assist you in the development of policies at your state and local levels of government, as well as private businesses, organizations, and agencies. They are:

1. **Cover Letter…** an introduction to the connection between pornography, violence and the clean hotel initiative.

2. **The Sexualization of Harm…** a brief compendium of research identifying the harm associated with the use of pornography including the harm caused by the making of pornography, as it relates to women and children used in prostitution.

3. **LodgeNet…Releases** a list of current or previous Lodgenet titles available in hotel sleeping rooms. LodgeNet is the largest distributor of adult pay per view pornography in the country. **Please note that the LodgeNet titles are graphic.**

4. **Model Policy** is a model policy which can be adapted to local needs.

5. **Responding to Challenges** provides talking points to commonly asked questions regarding the initiative.

6. **List of Minnesota “Clean Hotels”.** This is a partial list of hotels in Minnesota developed by the MN Department of Health, under the aegis of the MN Men’s Action Network, identifying hotels in Minnesota with 30 beds or greater that provide a pornography free environment

These documents are downloadable on the [Minnesota Men's Action Network: Alliance to](http://www.menaspeacemakers.org/cleanhotels)

[Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence](http://www.menaspeacemakers.org/cleanhotels) website.

That website address is: www.menaspeacemakers.org/cleanhotels

**Contacts:** If you have questions or would like to speak to someone about creating a “Clean

Hotel” policy, you can contact:

**Chuck Derry**, Co-Coordinator, MN Men’s Action Network, Email: gvi@frontiernet.net

**Patty Wetterling**, Program Director, Sexual Violence Prevention Program, Minnesota Department of Health, Email: Patty.Wetterling@state.mn.us

**Amy Kenzie,** Program Coordinator, Sexual Violence Prevention Program, Minnesota Department of Health, Email: Amy.Kenzie@state.mn.us

**Donna Dunn,** Executive Director,Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Email: donna@mncasa.org. The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault has adopted a Clean Hotel policy for its organization.

1. Gender Violence Institute. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The federal Violence Against Women Act of 2005 states that “nearly 1/3 of American women report physical and sexual abuse by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)