Preventing Sexual Assault in Utah Communities.

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WHEREAS, sexual assault is a devastating and intolerable violent crime with public health implications for individuals, communities, and institutions. According to the CDC sexual assault can have serious physical, psychological, and social consequences, as well as lead to an increase in health risk behaviors. Sexual violence shares underlying risk factors with other forms of negative health outcomes, including substance use, mental health problems and suicide ideation, poor familial relationships, and poverty. And,

WHEREAS, sexual violence during childhood and adolescence and its far-reaching implications for public health - continues to gain attention as those in the healthcare, education, and juvenile justice sectors struggle with what appears to be a national epidemic of chronic mental and physical illness. As demonstrated by the landmark Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, children who are sexually abused are much more likely to experience behavioral health/mental health issues, demonstrate unhealthy behaviors and develop physical health problems later in life (including heart disease and diabetes) leading to high healthcare costs and even early death.

WHEREAS, research conducted by the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice indicates that one in three Utah women will experience some form of sexual violence in her lifetime, and that ninety percent of victims will be assaulted by someone known to them, and

WHEREAS, national data suggests that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before turning eighteen as well as one in six adult women and one in thirty-three adult men have been victims of rape or attempted rape, and

WHEREAS, sexual assault is currently the only violent crime in Utah that annually exceeds the national average and Utah’s confirmed child sexual abuse rate of twenty-seven percent is three times the national average of nine percent, and

WHEREAS, organizations and agencies throughout the State of Utah are working to prevent sexual assault and to minimize the traumatic effects of sexual violence; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Utah recognizes the ongoing effort that will be necessary to respond to the pervasive issue of sexual assault in our communities, and to foster a society where sexual violence is no longer tolerated; and

WHEREAS, landmark research by the Utah Department of Health and Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault found that sexual violence costs Utah billions of dollars each year in direct and indirect costs to survivors, organizations, and institutions, and
WHEREAS, federal funding exists for the prevention of sexual assault but it is not enough to meet the vast need for prevention efforts across the state, and

WHEREAS, state-level prevention funding was not reauthorized during the 2018 legislative session, and

WHEREAS, prevention is possible, and resources are needed to build the capacity of prevention programs across the state to reduce the prevalence of sexual assault in Utah communities.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT:

The Utah Public Health Association supports establishing ongoing state-level funding for sexual assault prevention.

The Utah Public Health Association encourages its members to support efforts to increase sexual assault prevention statewide and to utilize primary prevention to address community-level risk and protective factors.