



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2020

Jessica Walsh Named Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center of Newport & Bristol Counties

The Women's Resource Center (WRC) of Newport & Bristol Counties is pleased to announce the promotion of Jessica Walsh as its Executive Director. Previously, Walsh served as Interim Executive Director following the retirement of former Executive Director Lori DiPersio in July 2019. She also held the title of Director of Prevention, spearheading the efforts of the Newport Health Equity Zone (HEZ). Having conducted a national search and considered numerous candidates, Walsh was determined to be the right person to lead the organization.

As Executive Director, Walsh will provide comprehensive oversight of the WRC's wide range of domestic violence programs and services. This includes counseling supports, shelter and housing services, court and family advocacy, and the operation of a 24-Hour Helpline. Additionally, the WRC drives domestic violence prevention through education, awareness, and key initiatives within the community.

Walsh's capacity to lead is supported by her 17-year record of excellence serving the WRC. Under her leadership with HEZ, the WRC has become a nationally recognized leader in evidence-informed prevention practices, a defining value of Walsh's approach to her work. Prioritizing health equity as a prevention strategy, Walsh has successfully led local efforts improving transportation, food access, education, innovation and economic opportunity, green space and parks, arts and culture, and physical and emotional health. By improving the well-being of a community, social determinants for violence can thus be reduced.

As a result, Walsh co-facilitates a national Community of Practice related to health equity, working with experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and supporting project officers and evaluators from ten states. She has developed curriculum and facilitated trainings for domestic violence professionals in other states, and she has been widely published. This includes a 2017 research feature in the Prevention Institute, a national publication, as well as local and state publications to include the Newport Health Equity Zone Needs Assessment Report (2016) and the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Our Future Depends on Preventing Domestic Violence (2016).

Board President Mary Johnstone says, "Since assuming the interim position, Jessica has met every challenge with clarity and determination. She has proven herself to be one of the greatest assets the WRC has. Through her leadership, she has successfully raised the overall culture of the staff environment, empowering them with autonomy and accountability. She has shown

herself to be an excellent communicator, both internally and externally, and as the lead grant writer for the WRC has continued to successfully obtain much-needed grants for the organization. Additionally, she has earned the respect and trust of the Board. Jessica has a distinct vision for where to take the WRC moving forward. She will continue to lead the organization's strong domestic violence programs and services, while identifying new ways to strengthen the position of the WRC as a leader in social justice, racial equity, and community well-being."

"I'm feeling excited to start this next phase of my journey with the WRC," Walsh says. "Put simply, I love this organization and I'm honored to be leading it. We have an amazing team of staff and board, and I'm quite confident that together we are going to really push the WRC to a new level. My commitment to social justice and racial equity is integral to who I am and how I lead. I look forward to integrating an equity lens into our analysis of programs and services."

About the WRC: The Women's Resource Center provides comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence and their families in Newport and Bristol Counties. The organization's mission is to lead efforts that prevent domestic violence by empowering both individuals and the community. This is done through advocacy, education and support services. For those escaping abuse, the WRC provides services including but not limited to counseling, support groups, law enforcement advocacy, court advocacy, shelter and residential services. They also operate a 24-hour helpline at 1-800-494-8100.

Link to: [Headshot of Jessica Walsh](#)

Website: www.wrcnbc.org

Facebook: Women's Resource Center

Twitter: @wrcnbc

Instagram: @wrc_nbc

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Mary Johnstone, Board President

mscjohnstone@gmail.com

401-225-7278

Jessica Walsh, Executive Director

jwalsh@wrcnbc.org

401-524-9045