



Pennsylvania  
**Commission on Crime  
and Delinquency**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Shapiro-Davis Administration Shares Life-Saving Resources During Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

*Today, PCCD brought together statewide and local domestic violence programs to highlight resources to respond to and prevent domestic violence.*

*The Shapiro-Davis Administration's proposed 2025-26 state budget includes a \$9 million investment in PCCD's Victims Compensation Assistance Program, ensuring continued support for victims of domestic violence and other crimes.*

**Harrisburg, PA** — In honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** and the **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV)** brought together local domestic violence programs and law enforcement officials to highlight warning signs and resources available to recognize, prevent, and respond to domestic violence, including the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) and PCCD's Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP).

"At some points, I wanted to give up, but then I remembered that inner spirit that I had that needed to break the cycle of abuse," said **Delia Sanchez, survivor of domestic violence and Legal Advocate/Paralegal, Domestic Violence Services of Lancaster County**. "We have to respect survivors where they're at and know that it's their story to share. I use my awakening moment to better understand where others are and to help advocate for the resources, respect, and understanding every survivor deserves. It's important that survivors have the information necessary for them to make informed decisions on how to get out safely."

"During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, it's critical that we lift the voices of those impacted, educate communities, strengthen collaboration across state and local partners, like those here with us today, working to save lives," said **Kathy Buckley, Director of Victims' Services for PCCD**. "Through initiatives like the LAP and VCAP, we're better identifying and responding to high-risk situations, connecting survivors with immediate safety and support, and providing the financial resources survivors need to begin rebuilding their lives. By working together, we can ensure that every survivor knows they are not alone and that help, hope, and healing are within reach during each step of their journey."

“While PCADV and its member programs engage community members in open dialogue about domestic violence year-round, October’s awareness month is a great time to have conversations about its underlying causes,” said **Susan Higginbotham, Chief Executive Officer, PCADV**. “[Every1KnowsSome1](#) impacted by domestic violence, and everyone can support survivors and join in the work to end violence in our communities.”

“My colleague Delia and I are honored to be here today to take part in this event and help to represent the strong network of local domestic violence programs in PA,” said **Christine Gilfillan, Director, Domestic Violence Services of Lancaster County**. “We are proud to be part of Domestic Violence Services of Lancaster County, a program of the Community Action Partnership, for nearly 50 years, which served over 2,400 victims and survivors of domestic violence last year. We are grateful for our partners at PCCD and PCADV, who provide guidance and resources for our work. Our goal is to turn Domestic Violence Awareness Month into Domestic Violence ACTION Month.”

### **Lethality Assessment Program**

[LAP](#) is an innovative, evidence-based initiative that strengthens collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers to connect individuals at risk of serious harm with life-saving support—ultimately helping to reduce domestic violence fatalities.

“The LAP is a tool that gives police and Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties the ability to identify whether a domestic violence situation could escalate into something highly volatile,” said **Sonya Brown, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties**. “We then work together to provide safety, support, and services.”

When responding to a domestic violence incident, law enforcement officers and other LAP-trained professionals use a standardized questionnaire to assess key risk factors—such as access to firearms, history of strangulation, escalating violence, and threats of homicide. When an individual is identified as being at high risk, responders work in real time with a local domestic violence program to develop immediate safety plans and connect survivors to critical services, including shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, and more.

“The collaborative work that the Hampden Township Police Department does in partnership with Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties is integral to the safety and security of domestic violence victims and their families,” said **Jason Yerg, Chief of Police, Hampden Township**. “Additionally, community education efforts help to increase awareness and further advocacy efforts throughout the area to identify those at risk.”

PCCD has partnered with PCADV since 2012 to support LAP, using a variety of state and federal funding streams to advance this evidence-based model in Pennsylvania communities. Last year alone, LAP was implemented across 17 new police departments. Currently, 436 law enforcement agencies and 48 domestic violence programs are [using the LAP](#) across the Commonwealth.

## **Victims Compensation**

[VCAP](#) serves as a critical financial lifeline for people who have experienced crime victimization, including survivors of domestic violence. Each year, the program receives an average of 12,000 claims for eligible expenses. The most common claim types for individuals impacted by domestic violence are medical and counseling expenses, loss of earnings, funeral costs, relocation, and crime scene clean-up.

Over the past five years, PCCD has paid more than 67,000 VCAP claims totaling \$67 million in eligible expenses for citizens across all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

In recent years, VCAP's expenses have exceeded deposits into the fund, depleting it to a critically low level. The Shapiro-Davis proposed 2025-26 state budget includes a \$9 million investment to stabilize VCAP, ensuring continued support for Pennsylvanians when they need it most.

## **Other Resources and Help**

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, free and confidential help is available 24/7. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), Text "START" to 88788, or [find your local domestic violence program](#) online.

To learn more about VCAP— including eligibility, eligible costs, and how to apply— visit the [PA Crime Victims website](#).

If you are an advocate or professional looking for domestic violence-related training, PCADV offers a variety of informative and educational pre-recorded webinars, in-person trainings, and an online learning center. Learn more on the [PCADV website](#).

*Photos/video from today's event can be found on [PAcast.com](#).*

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