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Mayor's Office to
Combat Domestic
Violence

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, New York City Police Department and Richmond County District Attorney's Office Launch First-Ever Anti-Stalking Initiative on Staten Island

Pilot aims to increase stalking arrests and prosecutions and bring awareness to the seriousness of stalking.

June 20, 2014 – Today the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), in collaboration with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (RCDA), launched the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) Program to increase stalking arrests and prosecutions, enhance the identification and reporting of stalking incidents, and bring awareness to the seriousness of stalking. The CAPS Program will build on the success of OCDV's Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), a program that provides rapid response to high-risk, high-lethality cases of Intimate Partner Violence and elder abuse.

"Stalking is a significant risk factor for lethality for victims of Intimate Partner Violence. Nationally, 54% of female homicide victims had reported stalking to police before they were killed by their intimate partner," said **OCDV Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis**. "This Anti-Stalking Program will allow us to ensure that cases are properly identified and that victims are linked with vital, life-saving services."

"Prosecuting domestic violence offenders has been a priority of my administration since day one. This specialized approach to stalking will provide police officers and my prosecutors with the legal know-how to evaluate and identify a course of conduct that constitutes stalking," said **Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.** "Research shows that most domestic incidents that end in violence were preceded by acts of stalking carried out by the offender. My hope is that if we arrest and convict an offender for stalking, we are potentially saving a victim from future harm."

Staten Island has seen a 37% increase in domestic violence arrests from 2010 to 2013. Thus far, year-to-date, the borough has seen a 16% rise in domestic violence arrests through May. RCDA has assigned an Assistant District Attorney to review all intimate partner stalking arrests that will result from the CAPS Program. This ADA will also review pending criminal cases for stalking behavior and add stalking charges where appropriate. During the implementation phase, the RCDA has already added stalking charges to several criminal complaints.

The NYPD will enhance identification of stalking cases in the 120th Precinct and 121st Precinct through ongoing review of Domestic Incident Reports (DIRs). The 120th Precinct currently ranks 9th in the city for overall number of Domestic Incident Reports (DIRs) filed. Through the CAPS Program, repeated DIRs for non-arrestable offenses, such as harassment, filed within a specific period of time will be reviewed to determine whether they can be combined to show a "course of conduct" and probable cause for a stalking arrest.

"The NYPD is proud to be part of the CAPS program in addressing the serious issue of domestic violence," said **NYPD Commissioner William J. Bratton**. "This predictive approach will help identify potential problems and afford opportunities to take the necessary steps to prevent further tragedies."

"This Anti-Stalking Initiative is a great example of a coordinated City approach to assist a vulnerable population," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**. "OCDV, NYPD, and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office working together with community partners will address the serious issue of intimate partner stalking by focusing attention and resources on preventing escalation of abuse which will save lives."

"Stalking is a serious crime and a dangerous precursor to lethal acts of domestic violence," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking Program will help enhance the reporting of stalking incidents and increase stalking arrests and I thank the de Blasio Administration, the NYPD and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office for their commitment to saving lives and protecting New Yorkers."

"All too often we in government act after the fact. Stalking frequently flies under the radar screen, but it is often a precursor to more heinous actions. It is encouraging to see the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the New York City Police Department and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office shed the reactive approach and proactively implement a program such as this Anti-Stalking Initiative so that we can respond immediately as the stalking occurs and not after it has evolved into a more violent act," said **Borough President James Oddo**. "I applaud Commissioner Rose Pierre-Louis, Commissioner Bill Bratton and District Attorney Daniel Donovan for crafting this program and I am very appreciative that Staten Island was chosen as the first borough for its implementation."

Cases where stalking behavior has been identified by the NYPD or RCDA, where a stalking arrest has been made, or where stalking charges have been added to a criminal complaint will be referred to DVRT. Victims who agree to participate in DVRT will be assigned to a case manager who is specially trained to manage stalking cases.

"Without a true understanding of its tragic outcomes, stalking by an intimate partner is too often misidentified, from victims to law enforcement – and this has to stop," said **Council Member Deborah Rose**. "I hope that this pilot program – with its emphasis on training advocates, case managers and police officers to better identify stalking behaviors – will lead not only to increased reporting and arrests, but, most importantly, to the increased safety of our residents."

"The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) Program is a proactive approach to curbing the number of New York City women who are victims of violence through increased education, reporting and policing," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo, Chair of the Women's Issues Committee**. "I applaud the collaborative effort between the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the NYPD, and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to launch this pilot program, which I hope will save lives and improve the safety of our communities."

"I am pleased at the creation of the first ever Anti-Stalking Initiative in Staten Island which serves to educate the public about the crime of stalking and raise the level of awareness," said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Chair of the Public Safety Committee**. "I applaud Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Rose Pierre-Louis, the NYPD and Staten Island District Attorney Dan Donovan for this collaboration. As the Chair of Public Safety, it is important to recognize that stalking threatens one's safety and can lead to unhealthy relationships and domestic violence. I look forward to working with the NYPD, OCDV and District Attorney on education and enforcement of stalking."

"The DVRT program has worked with over 70 high-risk, high-lethality clients in the last two years and concerns about unaddressed stalking behavior have always come up in our case discussions," said **DVRT Director Elizabeth**

Dank. “We think this Anti-Stalking Initiative will turn an underreported crime like stalking into a more urgent issue. Increased identification of stalking cases through the CAPS program will enhance the ability of DVRT and our partners to work preventively to reduce the incidence of intimate partner homicides.”

To prepare for the CAPS Program’s launch, DVRT staff provided training about stalking to NYPD Domestic Violence Prevention Officers and RCDA prosecutors and support staff. A training session for nonprofit advocates and case managers will be held later in the month.

About the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), established in 2001, oversees the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, develops policies and programs, and works with diverse communities to increase awareness of domestic violence. OCDV works with City agencies, community based and advocacy organizations, local leaders, and service providers to expand access to services citywide for victims and their children to receive the help that they need. For more information, please visit www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence or follow us on [twitter](#) or [facebook](#).

About the Richmond County District Attorney’s Office

The Richmond County District Attorney’s Office, Special Victims Bureau, investigates and prosecutes sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and crimes against seniors. Specially-trained prosecutors are assisted by victim advocates who accompany victims to court appearances, discuss safety issues and provide referrals for counseling. For more information, please visit <http://rcda.nyc.gov/>.

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