

# Domestic Violence and Fatality Review Team



BALTIMORE COUNTY  
MARYLAND



## Annual Report 2010

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## Chapter II – Fatality Review Team Annual Report

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It seems appropriate, at the writing of this, our fifth Annual Report on the status of domestic violence in our community, to review the highlights of the last five fiscal years:

**2006:**

- The first Annual Report on Domestic Violence was distributed to the community highlighting efforts to strengthen our coordinated response, identifying existing resources, and educating the community on the level of violence towards women.
- The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council was established as a Committee of the Baltimore County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
- The Healthy Relationships Information and Education Program was implemented.

**2007:**

- The Lethality Assessment program was piloted in Dundalk.
- The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team was convened.
- A partnership between the Baltimore County Police Department and the Service Providers was created to conduct joint home visits to domestic violence victims.
- The First Annual Domestic Violence Conference was hosted and continues as an annual event.

**2008:**

- "The Owing Up" program was implemented training students and staff on violence prevention techniques.
- A newsletter was launched to strengthen communication within the Domestic Violence community and Service Provider.

**2009:**

- The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team began to review fatalities.
- The Lethality Assessment Program was implemented County wide.
- A "Court Watch" Program was implemented.

In **2010** we changed the format of this report to include the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Findings and Recommendations creating a second chapter. We are also pleased to report on three very important trends:

- There was a decrease in the number of domestic violence fatalities: Fifteen (15) in FY' 2009 with five (5) in FY' 2010.
- The number of Domestic Related Police Reports decreased 9% between calendar years 2005 and 2009.
- There has been an increase in the number of joint home visits ensuring victims of domestic violence are provided information and resources to end the cycle of violence.

We believe that our collaborative and effective response to domestic violence is reducing the incidence of violence against women and that by connecting women to services, holding the offender accountable, and educating the community, we are creating safe and healthy homes for families.

**Marci Van De Mark**

Assistant Director  
Baltimore County Department  
of Social Services

**Karen Keyser**

Domestic Violence Coordinator  
Baltimore County Department  
of Social Services

# Introduction

**Domestic Violence  
Coordinating Council**

**Rosalyn Branson**  
Executive Director  
TurnAround, Inc

**Flor Giusti**  
Director  
Adelante Familia

**Douglas Murphy**  
Executive/Clinical Director  
Family Crisis Center

**Patricia Thompson**  
District Director  
Family & Children Services

**Karen Keyser**  
Domestic Violence Coordinator  
Baltimore County Department  
of Social Services

**Marci Van De Mark**  
Assistant Director  
Baltimore County Department  
of Social Services



## Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Overview

In 1986, Baltimore County was one of four jurisdictions nationwide to receive funding from the Department of Justice to initiate a Coordinating Council. This Council is now celebrating twenty-three years of commitment to:

- Increase awareness of Domestic Violence
- Increase partnerships within County agencies and private non-profit agencies
- Identify areas to concentrate efforts to help victims

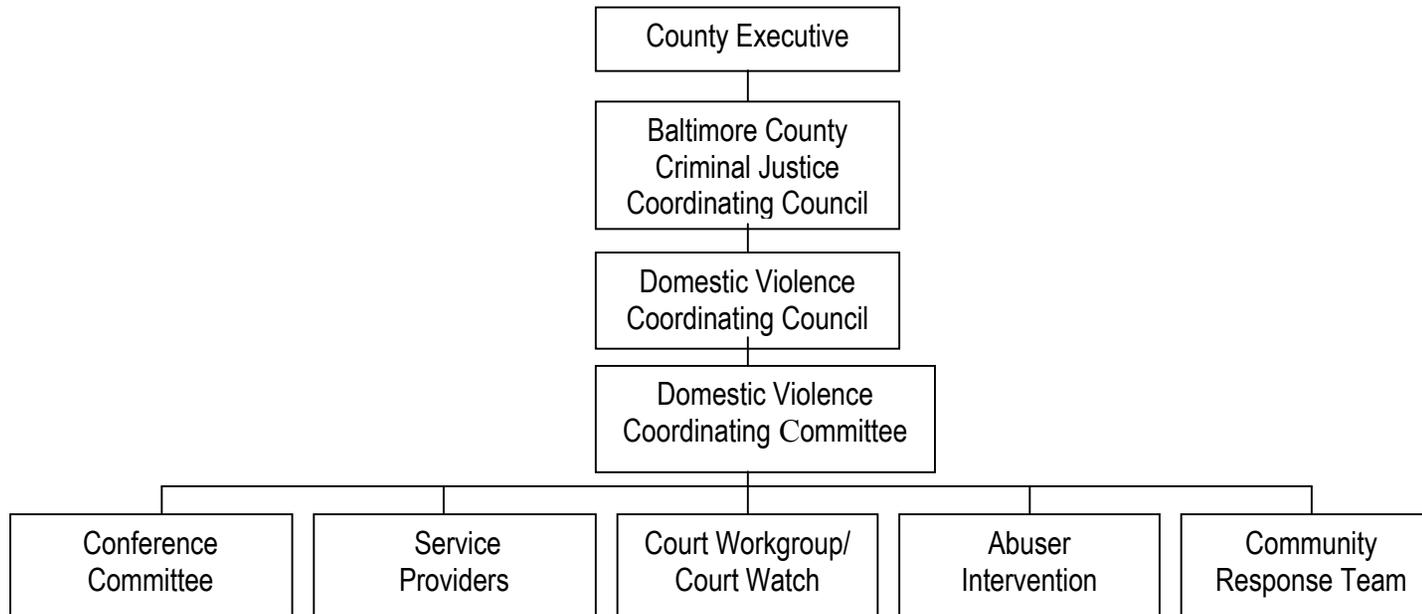
In 2005, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) was established as a Committee of the Baltimore County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). Created by the Baltimore County Executive, the mandate for the CJCC is to:

- Study the Baltimore County juvenile and criminal justice systems, identify deficiencies, and formulate policy, plans and programs for improvement
- Communicate and present planning, financial, operational, managerial and programmatic recommendations to the agencies represented on the Council
- Provide the coordinated leadership necessary to establish cohesive criminal justice strategies, policies and programs
- Collaborate to maximize resources and raise funds to support criminal justice programs

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council works to assist the CJCC in accomplishing this mandate with respect to the particular area of Domestic Violence. The DVCC's primary goals are to:

- Identify gaps in service delivery
- Coordinate services and resources directly to those who need assistance
- Monitor the Criminal Justice system's response to Domestic Violence
- Develop a mechanism to ensure offenders comply with court ordered treatment, and identify and recommend "best practices" to most effectively reach victims and provide services
- Develop effective communication within the domestic violence arena
- Educate the community

**Baltimore County Criminal Justice  
Coordinating Council**



**Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee Overview**

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council has 5 sub-committees staffed by volunteers that meet bi-monthly. Annually each sub-committee identifies goals that become the focus of their work. We are pleased to report on the accomplishments of each sub-committee:

**Conference Committee:**

This year a committee of 10 assisted in hosting a conference for 175 attendees. The keynote speakers were the Honorable Judge Ben C. Clyburn, Chief Judge of District Court of Maryland and the morning keynote was Joe Ehrmann from Coach for America.

#### Service Providers Sub-Committee:

- There are four (4) domestic violence programs in Baltimore County. Written protocols were refined to ensure a consistent intervention with all Domestic Violence Referral Program clients.
- The Service Providers collaborated with the 10 Police precincts to ensure the successful implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program County wide. This included creating three lethality response lines and joint home visits to all victims identified as being in a high danger relationship.

#### Court Workgroup/Court Watch Sub-Committee:

- An effective and accessible process was created to obtain protective orders for domestic violence victims with the Service Providers and the Judicial System.
- A Court Watch program was coordinated with more than 10 volunteers who observed more than 780 District Court cases and 17 District Court judges and visiting judges.

#### Abuser Intervention Sub-Committee:

- Partner contact protocols were developed and implemented and are now standard procedures throughout the County.
- Trained staff working with offenders on best practices for facilitating groups and documenting termination of non-compliant clients.
- Developed and implemented standardized protocols for referring Pre-trial clients to treatment agencies.

#### Community Response Team:

- Community education efforts continued by displaying domestic violence resources in our libraries.
- The “Get Help” card was updated and distributed to libraries, the Police Department, Courthouse restrooms, Churches, Hospitals and other locations ensuring resources are easily accessible to domestic violence victims.
- All publications distributed in the community were edited.
- Created additional Domestic Violence resources for teens and distributed to high schools through guidance counselors and student resource pupil personnel officers distributed in high schools.
- Distributed Teen Date Violence Awareness booklets and educational posters to Baltimore County High Schools.

## Baltimore County's Coordinated Effort to Address Domestic Violence



### A. Baltimore County Police Department

The Baltimore County Police Department was established in 1874 to better protect the persons and property of Baltimore County. To that end the Baltimore County Police Department strives to reduce the level of domestic violence by improving victim services, conducting thorough investigations, and promoting safe domestic environments. Beginning in 1999 the Baltimore County Police Department, through its strategic planning process, developed a plan to improve the management of domestic violence cases. In 2000, federal grant funding enabled the Department to train and assign patrol officers to serve as precinct-level Domestic Violence Coordinators (DVC's). By the end of 2006 each of the Police Department's ten precincts had a Domestic Violence Coordinator dedicated to domestic violence incidents. The Department also has one Hispanic Liaison/Domestic Violence Coordinator position assigned to the Youth and Community Resources Section.

It is the policy of the Baltimore County Police Department to provide the highest possible level of service to the citizens of Baltimore County. In this regard, they continue to build partnerships with other agencies and service providers to offer a strong continuum of services to victims of domestic violence and enhance the prosecution of offenders. Each Domestic Violence Coordinator shall strive to:

- Significantly reduce the levels of domestic violence in Baltimore County.
- Ensure a consistent response to all victims and reporting of situations.
- Provide a safe, problem-solving response to domestic situations.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of domestic violence.

According to 2009 data, the Police Department responded to 10,837 calls related to domestic violence. This is a decrease of 9% over a four year period of time.

## Baltimore County Police Department

### Domestic Related Police Reports by Precinct By Calendar Year

Year	Wilkins 01	Woodlawn 02	Franklin 03	Pikesville 04	Towson 06	Cockeysville 07	Parkville 08	White Marsh 09	Essex 11	North Point 12	Total
<b>2006</b>	1,048	1,820	875	811	587	606	762	1,219	1,728	2,252	11,708
<b>2007</b>	982	1,720	1,105	802	555	528	743	1,075	1,736	2,121	11,367
<b>2008</b>	1,063	1,596	1,083	759	536	474	698	1,069	1,601	2,015	10,894
<b>2009</b>	1,063	1,596	1,083	759	536	474	698	1,056	1,601	2,015	10,894
<b>2010</b>	1,064	1,643	991	751	648	472	593	1,058	1,617	2,000	10,837
% of change 2009-2010	0%	3%	-8%	-1%	20%	0%	-15%	-1%	1%	-1%	-1%

**\*Data provided by Baltimore County Police Department  
Crime Analysis Section**

## Baltimore County

### Domestic Violence Fatalities

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>FY 07</b>	<b>FY 08</b>	<b>FY 09</b>	<b>FY 10</b>
<b>Victims</b>	5	5	11	3
<b>Bystanders</b>		2		1
<b>Children</b>	1		1	
<b>Suicides</b>	1	2	3	1
<b>Infanticide</b>	1			
<b>Other</b>	1			
<b>Total</b>	9	9	15	5

Effective 2007, the Baltimore County Domestic Violence Committee, considered all domestic violence fatalities, whether it is a victim, bystander, child, suicide or infanticide as a domestic violence fatality. It is clear that all of the deaths are a result of domestic violence, whether intended or not.

Baltimore County also counts every fatality that occurs in our jurisdiction. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence assigns the domestic violence homicide to the County where victim services were or could have been provided. Therefore, there may be a statistical discrepancy in fatality numbers between the County and State.

Consistent with State Fatality Review protocols domestic violence occurs when abuse is between:

- Current or former spouse or cohabitant
- Persons who have a child in common
- Persons currently or formerly involved in a dating relationship

As you can see from the above chart, 44% of the fatalities were victims in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, 73% were victims and in 2010, 60%. Between 2009 and 2010, there was a 66% decrease in the number of domestic violence-related fatalities in Baltimore County. It is to be noted in 2009 a father killed his two daughters, wife and then himself accounting for four (4) fatalities. When reviewing the past four (4) years, 2010 shows a significant decrease.



## **B. State's Attorney's Office**

The Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Unit was established by Sandra O'Connor in 1993. The Unit utilizes evidence based prosecution techniques and works to hold abusers accountable, helps ensure the safety of victims, and acts to interrupt the cycle of domestic violence.

This Unit has provided leadership in the implementation of numerous initiatives and strategies in the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases. Efforts are made to contact all of the victims of domestic violence crimes in the early part of the judicial process to help establish their confidence in the system. An open line of communication is maintained through the trial date to ensure the continued cooperation and safety of the victims.

The State's Attorney's Office provides ongoing in-service training for the Baltimore County Police Department, as well as specialized training in domestic violence investigation to all Baltimore County Police Academy recruits. Under the direction of the State's Attorney's Office, training opportunities addressing the issue of non-fatal strangulation assaults are offered to police, prosecutors, emergency personnel, commissioners and the bench. This coordinated effort between the police and prosecutors has resulted in an effective partnership in the battle against domestic violence crimes.

Under the leadership of State's Attorney, Scott D. Shellenberger, the judicial intervention necessary to break the cycle of domestic violence continues to be a high priority. This Office's commitment to reducing domestic violence is evident by their usage of the pro prosecution model and the continuation of a domestic violence focused legal unit.

## **C. Court System**

### **Baltimore County Circuit and District Courts**

Baltimore County has three District Courts and one Circuit Court with 16 courtrooms. The District Courts are located in Towson, Catonsville and Essex. The Circuit Court building is centrally located in Towson, Maryland. Cases of domestic violence are heard in both District and Circuit Courts.

Circuit Court hears civil cases including divorce, custody and Protective Order cases. Circuit Courts preside over felony criminal hearing, misdemeanor jury trials and civil matters. The Circuit Court is the only Court in the State that has the power to hear jury trials. The District Court hears misdemeanor criminal cases, some serious traffic offenses, preliminary hearings and civil cases. Both Circuit and District Courts issue Protective Orders.

Protective Orders provide the Petitioner relief from violence, custody, and emergency family maintenance. It can also order the Respondent to vacate the home and attend domestic violence counseling. Respondents are required to surrender all fire arms.

Protective Order cases are a two-step process in District Court with the exception of Protective Orders that originate at the interim stage in front of a court commissioner. These are a three-step process:

- First the victim files a Petition for protection from abuse.
  - The Judge then conducts an ex-parte hearing and determines whether an order meets the necessary criteria for granting the order.
  - If it does, the Judge grants the petitioner a temporary order that provides protection from the violence. The temporary order is granted for seven days.
  - Temporary orders can be extended up to 6 months in order to have the respondent served.
  
- A Protective Order hearing is scheduled for seven days later:
  - At the Protective Order hearing, the Judge makes a determination, based on the evidence presented, whether a Protective Order can be granted.
  - If the order is granted, protection may be continued through one year and can be extended for an additional (6) month period of time.

Peace Orders provide relief to Petitioners who have been involved in a dating relationship with the Respondent and do not qualify for a Protective Order. A Petitioner qualifies for a Peace Order if the Petitioner and Respondent have no children in common and they have not lived together for more than ninety days. The process for filing a Peace Order is the same as it is for filing for a Protective Order. The difference being that final Peace Orders provide relief for up to 6 months and may not be extended further.

**Domestic Violence and Peace Order Dispositions  
in the  
Baltimore County District Court of Maryland**

Baltimore County	Domestic Violence					
	Cases Filed	Transfers to Circuit Court	Interim Order Granted	ExParte Order Granted	Protective Order Granted	Appeal
2006	3,685	8	1,065	1,955	846	41
2007	3,758	17	1,208	2,029	882	31
2008	3,515	34	1,505	2,584	1,546	55
2009	3,667	24	1,282	2,179	1,030	44
2010	3,476	21	1,259	2,057	871	49

Data collected from the Annual Report of  
Maryland Judiciary  
District Court of Maryland Domestic Violence  
And Peace Order Activity Report



Data has not yet been released



**Domestic Violence Protective Order Dispositions  
In the  
Baltimore County Circuit Court of Maryland**

	Domestic Violence Cases Heard			
	Temporary Protective Orders		Final Protective Orders	
Baltimore County	Hearings	Orders Granted	Hearings	Orders Granted
2006	468	293	327	153
2007	464	258	279	91
2008	431	260	353	156
2009	341	228	286	146

FY2010

## D. Sheriff's Office

There are 83 Deputies in the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office is charged with the responsibility of serving domestic violence respondents with a copy of their protective orders. When an ex-parte protective order is obtained in Circuit Court, the clerk delivers the order to the Sheriff's Department and the Deputy on duty reviews the order, and interviews the petitioner to gather information on how best to serve the order on the respondents considering:



- Location of home
- Address of work
- Physical description of respondent
- License plate number of the respondent's vehicle

Every attempt is made to be timely in serving the orders. To ensure the victim's safety, the protective order information is recorded prior to serving the order. Updated information is entered after service is made, or not, allowing other appropriate Law Enforcement agencies access to the status of these protective orders and ex-parte orders.

**Protective Orders Served  
By  
Baltimore County Sheriff's Department**

<b>2007</b>	409
<b>2008</b>	424
<b>2009</b>	533
<b>2010</b>	508



### E. The Department of Social Services (DSS)

Established in 1932, the Baltimore County Department of Social Services (BCoDSS) is a public social services agency that is mandated by the State to provide protective services for children and vulnerable adults. The Department provides family and children’s services, foster care and adoption services, adult and adolescent services and includes the Housing Office, which operates the Section 8 housing program. It also administers state and federal welfare programs.

The Family Violence Unit is a criminal justice sub-agency, which operates within the BCoDSS. The Family Violence Unit was established in 1983 as part of the Criminal Justice Coordinator’s Office and was transferred to the BCoDSS in 1993. This Unit provides victim support services including a 24-hour crisis hotline, Victim Court Advocates, and Case Monitors who refer and track violators who have been court ordered to engage in batterer’s treatment. This unit provides domestic violence coordination and liaison among the private, non-profit treatment agencies and the criminal justice agencies in Baltimore County. It also provides community education and training. The goal is “to improve the response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Baltimore County.”

- **24-hour Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline-** Provides 24-hour response to victims and secondary victims with information about services and resources for immediate help in crisis situations. The Hotline operates 24 hours 365 days a year and is staffed by volunteers. The Hotline Coordinator recruits, trains, and supports the volunteers and supervises the Hotline Manager, who is responsible for day-to-day scheduling and collection of statistics.

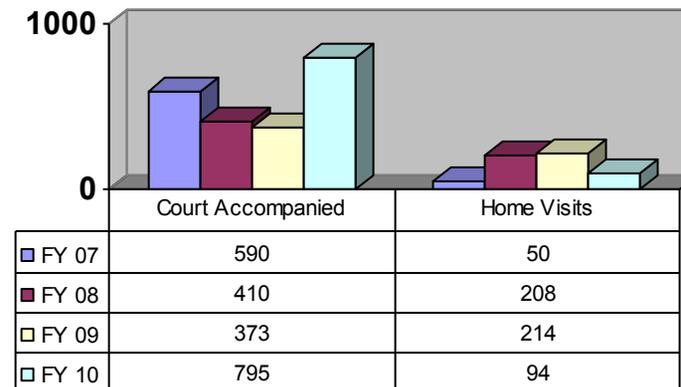
#### Domestic Violence Hotline Calls

Fiscal Year	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
<b>Total Calls</b>	6,086	6,512	5,853	5,723
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	1,336	1,315	1,177	1,352
<b>Shelter</b>	694	685	614	645
<b>Rape</b>	197	213	237	217

Please note: This is a duplicated count. There is a 17% reduction in Information and Referral calls as a result of instituting procedures to discourage inappropriate usage of the Hotline.

**Court Advocate Program-** Contacts all victims whose abusers are scheduled for trial. Without providing legal advice, the Advocates explain available remedies and protection, while alerting victims to the variety of possible outcomes. They also make referrals to services and explain the resources that are available to help victims. At the trial, the Court Advocates accompany victims who want their support to criminal cases, and accompany victims to help them complete the process for obtaining a protective order. This staff also accompanies Baltimore County Police on home visits. The Domestic Violence Service Providers received VARA (Violence Against Women Recovery Act) funding to increase staff accompanying Police Domestic Violence Coordinators on home visits thereby decreasing the Department of Social Services role.

### Court Advocate Activities



- **Domestic Violence Referral Program-** The staff interviews and refers defendants who are court-ordered to attend the Abuser Intervention Program or the Healthy Relationship Program. The Case Monitor, who arranges the referral, also follows-up to ensure that all court orders are honored. If a defendant does not complete the treatment program as ordered, the Case Monitor notifies the court.

#### a. Abuser Intervention Program (AIP)

The Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) is designed to help offenders stop using violence and other control tactics in their intimate partner relationships. The goal is to teach effective non-violent skills and show respect for one’s partner. The purpose of the AIP is to support the criminal justice system in holding the offender accountable for his/her actions and to promote safety for victims. The Court orders offenders to the Domestic Violence Referral Program for placement in a State certified Abuser Intervention Programs.

**b. Healthy Relationships Program (HRP)**

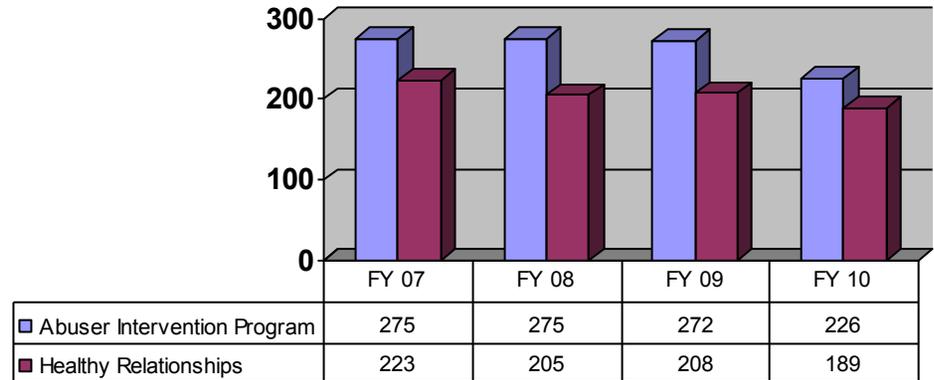
The Healthy Relationships Program is a short-term education and information program addressing the needs of first time offenders of domestic violence. The District and Circuit Courts of Baltimore County order defendants to the Domestic Violence Referral program for placement in a 4 week program at Family Crisis Center and Family and Children’s Services. Defendants must be first time offenders who did not use a weapon or cause serious injury to the victim in order to qualify for this program.

**Domestic Violence Court Program**

Abuser Intervention Program	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
Baltimore County Circuit Court	69	89	116	99
Baltimore County District Courts	187	170	149	119
Other Jurisdictions	19	16	7	8
Total	275	275	272	226

Healthy Relationships Program	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
Baltimore County Circuit Courts	0	0	3	8
Baltimore County District Courts	223	205	205	181
Total	223	205	208	189

**Family Violence Programs**



- The referrals by the District Court to the Abuser Intervention Program decreased by 36% from 2007 to 2010.
- The referrals from the Circuit Court to the Abuser Intervention Program increased by 48% from 2007 to 2010.

**c. Abuser Intervention and Healthy Relationship Program**

**Domestic Violence Referral Program  
Program Completion Status Report  
2010**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Satisfactory Termination</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory Termination</b>
Abuser Intervention Program	106	74
Healthy Relationships Program	168	59
Total	274	133

This data indicates that of the 407 completion reports received by the Domestic Violence Referral Program this year, 67% of the clients satisfactorily completed the program:

- 39% of those attending the 26 week Abuser Intervention Program completed the full program.
- 61% of those attending the 4 week Healthy Relationship Program completed it.

**F. Domestic Violence Community Providers**  
**1. Service Providers**

**Adelante Familia**  
**3734 Eastern Avenue**  
**Baltimore, MD 21231**  
**410-732-2176**

The goals of Adelante Familia (a bilingual domestic violence program of St. Vincent de Paul) are to eliminate the incidence of violence, reduce tolerance to violence, promote healthy families, and prevent another generation of victims and abusers. Adelante Familia accomplishes this goal by providing culturally competent and linguistically specific domestic violence prevention and crisis intervention services to Latino immigrant families. This includes victim support services such as crisis counseling, resource referral, legal advocacy & accompaniment, general support services, women support groups, educational workshops, financial assistance, food assistance, SafeNights as well as a 40-week abuser intervention treatment program. Adelante Familia offers comprehensive, community-based and women-centered advocacy services that recognize the “family” as a central value.

<b>Adelante Familia</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Total Number of victims served</b>	226	218	444	440
<b>Victims participating in support groups</b>	28	22	32	55
<b>Victims receiving support &amp; advocacy services</b>	180	183	213	272
<b>Total number of group participants</b>	115	187	220	214

**Family & Children's Services**  
**700 Security Blvd, Suite 302**  
**Baltimore, MD 21244**  
**410-281-1334**

Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland (F&CS) has been dedicated to providing our communities with a full range of family support services for nearly 150 years. These services address single parent issues, relationship disruption, parent-child issues, teen pregnancy prevention, teen-parent issues, family violence, and child sexual abuse and elder care issues.

The Baltimore and Carroll County Offices of F&CS provide a comprehensive array of services to victims of domestic violence. Services include 24-hour hotline, individual and/or group counseling for women, children and men, support groups for battered women, referrals and assistance in obtaining financial help, shelter, day care, housing, food and legal services. Weekly groups are held for batterers so they can learn non-violent methods of communication and stress reduction. Batterers may be self-referred, referred by partners, or court-ordered.

The mission of the Domestic Violence Program at Family and Children's Services is to assist victims of domestic violence and their children in maintaining their safety and providing a holistic approach to services that include the victims, child witnesses and abusers of domestic violence. F&CS offers a full range of services to families who have experienced domestic violence, including a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, legal advocacy through court accompaniment and referrals for legal consultation; case management; individual and group counseling for victims of domestic violence and their children; outreach with police accompaniment following 911 reports and to immigrant populations; abuser intervention services and anger management as a preventative tool for domestic violence. F&CS also works to increase community awareness by providing community education to the general public and targeted populations.

FCS numbers have decreased due to sharing of home visits for the West Baltimore County jurisdiction with the Northwest Hospital DOVE program. They are now responsible for home visits with in precincts 3 & 4. They also provide ongoing case management to some of the clients in these precincts.

Description	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
<b>Sheltered</b>	22	9	28	30
Women	14	7	12	14
Children	8	2	16	16
Men	0	0	0	0
<b>Unable to Shelter</b>	12	3	13	59
<b>Crisis Intervention/Case Management</b>				
Individual Served			1262	939
<b>Clinical Counseling</b>				
Individual Served	77	3	92	94
<b>Home Visits</b>			553	307

**Family Crisis Center**  
**P.O. Box 3909**  
**Baltimore, MD 21222**  
**410-285-4357**

The Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County, Inc. (FCC) is a private non-profit organization founded thirty-one years ago with a mission to provide high quality services for persons experiencing conflict and domestic violence, and to provide education and consultation for the community at large, in an effort to prevent violence in families.

Over the past three decades, FCC has grown to become the most comprehensive family violence service agency in Baltimore County. Three hundred sixty-five days a year, 24 hours a day the Center strives to fulfill its mission by providing essential services to ensure the safety of family members in Baltimore County. In FY 2010 the Family Crisis Center began occupation of a newly Baltimore County renovated \$6,000,000 facility, which will further ensure the availability of services, safety and security. Services include:

- A community-based FAMILY PSYCHOTHERAPY CLINIC available to individuals, couples, children, and families.
- Baltimore County’s only on-site SAFE SHELTER for individuals fleeing their home because of violence or the threat of violence.
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING allowing survivors additional time and support to reestablish themselves in the community.
- LEGAL SERVICES including direct legal representation for victims of domestic violence in both the Circuit and District Courts of Baltimore County primarily in: Peace/Protective Order hearings, Divorce, Child Custody and Support. FCC’s staff attorney also advises and guides pro se litigants, and provides referrals to other agencies and private attorneys.
- ADVOCACY SERVICES including accompanying victims to court, extending outreach services through home visits to victims and facilitating survivor support groups.
- NEW BEHAVIOR GROUPS helping abusers learn new non-violent ways to recognize and handle stress and conflict within their families.
- FCC administers Baltimore County’s CRISIS HOTLINE, providing trained volunteers to respond to crisis calls twenty-four hours a day.

Family Crisis Center	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
<b>Sheltered</b>	362	285	338	222
Women	152	111	128	102
Children	207	171	206	119
Men	3	3	4	1
<b>Unable to Shelter</b>	71	205	120	161
<b>Crisis Intervention/Case Management</b>	1,419	961	1432	1321
<b>Clinical Counseling</b>				
Adults	*	*	236	200
Children	*	*	53	84
<b>Home Visits</b>	*	*	639	840

\* Data Not Available

**TurnAround, Inc.**  
**401 Washington Avenue, Suite 300**  
**Towson, MD 21204**  
**410-377-8111**

TurnAround, Inc., a private non-profit serving the Baltimore area for over 30 years, provides a variety of services for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse. TurnAround’s mission is to build a community free of violence by working with adults and children affected by intimate partner and sexual violence to address their needs and prevent further violence through advocacy and education.

Services include skilled therapists that help clients of all ages heal from the devastating effects of violence. TurnAround, Inc offers individual and group counseling as well as on-site groups at area schools, shelters, faith based organizations, drop-in centers, correctional centers and other service provider offices. TurnAround also helps ensure victim safety and advocacy through a 24-hour hotline, which assists in obtaining emergency shelter for victims and provides crisis intervention and advocacy to survivors in local hospitals through the Emergency Room Companion program. TurnAround operates a Transitional Housing Program that provides domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and their children the opportunity to gain the independence and stability that is so important to ensure the prevention of future violence in families. TurnAround’s legal department assists victims in obtaining final protective orders. The Community Education and Training Department conducts presentations in local schools, community centers, shelters, correctional facilities and other non-profits that raise awareness about violence and teach participants how to end and prevent abuse. The agency also operates a Survivors’ Network where survivors practice leadership, public speaking skills, learn self-defense and other physical fitness skills. The agency offers free self-defense classes to women and girls over 16 years of age.

<b>TurnAround</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Sheltered</b>	117	98	110	100
Women	52	47	50	45
Men	0	1	2	1
Children	65	50	58	54
<b>Unable to Shelter</b>	86	26	223	N/A
<b>Crisis Intervention/Case Management</b>			1,396	1633
<b>Clinical Counseling</b>				
Adults			159	198
Children			32	28
Domestic Violence Victims	171	203	192	226
<b>HomeVisits</b>	<b>No home visits during this time period</b>			

**The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.**  
**401 Bosley Avenue, Room 101**  
**Towson, MD 21204**  
**410-887-3162**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland (WLC), a non-profit organization, established in 1971, advocates for an equal playing field in the law for women and children. For more than a quarter of a century, the WLC has fought and won many battles to protect and preserve the rights of women by educating the public and the judiciary on the effects of legal decisions affecting women, by monitoring compliance with the laws, by seeking to change unjust laws and unjust lawmaking, and by implementing innovative programs to pave the way for systemic change.

The WLC's **Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Project in Baltimore County** (POARP) represents victims of domestic violence at Protection Order Hearings in Circuit Court. The Project's attorneys represent people who have been abused by an intimate partner (current or past boyfriend/girlfriend, current or ex-spouse) in proceeding to obtain protection orders, enforce protection orders through contempt, and modify existing protection orders.

The project is open Monday through Friday and it is free to the victim. They are conveniently located in the Baltimore County Circuit Court, 401 Bosely Ave., Towson MD. For more information, call 410-887-3162 for the Baltimore County office. The WLC also has POARP offices in Baltimore City (410-783-0377) and in Carroll County (410-386-2440).

In 2010, POARP offices in Baltimore and Carroll Counties and Baltimore City provided extensive legal advice or representation in a Protective Order hearing to 770 victims of domestic violence. An additional 939 victims received legal advice and referrals. Of these, legal representation or extensive legal advice was provided to 230 individuals and an additional 426 receiving legal advice or referrals in Baltimore County.

The POARP offices have conducted follow-up surveys with the clients who received Protective Orders (PO) and found the following for 2010:

- 70% report the respondent has followed the PO
- 97% report no threats or abuse since the PO
- 96% would go to Court again because of violence
- 92% report it was easier to use POARP's legal services because the office was located in the courthouse
- 71% would not have had an attorney without POARP's services
- 98% were satisfied with POARP's services and would use them again
- 94% felt safer after receiving services from POARP

The POARP also conducts exit surveys for a client who's Protective Orders (PO) are about to expire:

- ◆ 66% report the respondent followed the order completely
- ◆ 81% report no threat or abuse
- ◆ 43% are still afraid

## 2. Hospital Based Services

**Northwest Hospital  
5401 Old Court Road  
Baltimore, MD  
410-496-7555**

**Domestic Violence – A Public Health Epidemic:** Research shows that in addition to domestic violence being the leading cause of injuries to women, abused women experience 60% overall higher health problems. Victims of domestic violence are seen in health care settings more often than shelters and legal settings. Hospitals provide a safe 24/7 setting for victims of domestic violence to receive help.

**Northwest Hospital:** Currently, Northwest Hospital has Baltimore County’s only formal hospital-based Domestic Violence Program (DOVE). Established in 2004, the program assures 24/7 crisis counseling, lethality assessment and safety planning to all victims. Working closely with Baltimore County Police Domestic Violence Coordinators, the State’s Attorney’s Office, The Women’s Law Center, the Court Advocate Program and the local domestic violence services, subsequent follow-up services are provided to ensure safety, legal assistance and counseling services for victims and their children.

### Northwest Hospital DOVE Program Statistics:

Year	# Of Victims Served	# Of Staff Trained
<b>FY 2006</b>	75	
<b>FY 2007</b>	145	748
<b>FY 2008</b>	225	757
<b>FY 2009</b>	213	512
<b>FY 2010</b>	605	505

### **Strangulation Response Project, Forensic Light Source Project and Lethality Assessment Project:**

Over the past few years, DOVE has been working closely with law enforcement in Woodlawn, Pikesville and Franklin Precincts on these special projects. The Strangulation Response and Forensic Light Source Project both seek to provide better response to strangulation victims and better evidence for prosecution. DOVE also began accompanying the police on home visits for Baltimore County’s Lethality Assessment Project in Pikesville and Franklin Precincts.

## **G. County Initiatives**

### **Baltimore County**

#### **Lethality Assessment Program**

Baltimore County implemented a pilot Lethality Assessment program in the Northpoint Police precinct (Dundalk) in 2008. The program was implemented county-wide on May 1, 2009. This program is a collaborative approach to identifying victims of domestic violence who are at high risk of either being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partner. The pilot program demonstrated an effective approach to alerting victims to the seriousness of the violence, engaging them in treatment, and providing the Police Officer on the scene with both a screening assessment tool and resources to assist victims.

Since the implementation in 2009 in all ten (10) precincts, data from the Lethality Assessment Program indicates:

- There were 2,234 victims screened with the Lethality Assessment Tool.
- 1101 (49%) were identified as high danger.
- Of the 1101 identified as high danger, 832 (75%) were connected to the lethality response line.
- 40% of the victims contacted a treatment agency.
- 495 (45%) of the victims were successfully visited by a Domestic Violence Coordinator and Advocate.

Protocols of the Lethality Assessment Program:

- The Police Officer responding to the scene of a domestic violence incident administers an 11 question lethality screening questionnaire.
- If the victim screens in, indicating she is in a high danger situation, the Police Officer contacts the lethality response line.
- The 24/7 lethality response line, staffed by trained professionals from Family & Children Services, Family Crisis Center, and TurnAround provide shelter, access to treatment services and safety planning.
- Home visits providing information and resources are made to each “high danger” victim by the Police Domestic Violence Coordinator and Program Advocates.
- Domestic violence information packets are sent to each domestic violence victim for whom a home visit was not completed.

On the following page is the actual lethality assessment screen used by the Police Officers, and other first responders, at the scene of a domestic violence incident.



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LETHALITY SCREEN FOR FIRST RESPONDERS



Officer:	Date:	Case #:
Victim:	Offender:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if victim did not answer any of the questions		
<b>▶ A "Yes" response to any of Questions #1-3 automatically triggers the protocol referral.</b>		
1. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
2. Has he/She threatened to kill you or your children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
3. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
<b>▶ Negative responses to Questions #1-3, but positive responses to at least four of Questions #4-11, trigger the protocol referral.</b>		
4. Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
5. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
6. Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
7. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
8. Is he/she unemployed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
9. Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
10. Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
11. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Ans.
<b>▶ An officer may trigger the protocol referral, if not already triggered above, as a result of the victim's response to the below question, or whenever the officer believes the victim is in a potentially lethal situation.</b>		
Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? (If "yes") What worries you?		
Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> Victim screened in according to the protocol <input type="checkbox"/> Victim screened in based on the belief of the officer <input type="checkbox"/> Victim did not screen in		
If victim screened in: After advising her/him of a high danger assessment, did the victim speak with the hotline counselor? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

**Note:** The questions above and the criteria for determining the level of risk a person faces is based on the best available research on factors associated with lethal violence by a current or former intimate partner. However, each situation may present unique factors that influence risk for lethal violence that are not captured by this screen. Although most victims who screen "positive" or "high danger" would not be expected to be killed, these victims face much higher risk than that of other victims of intimate partner violence. MNADV 08/2005

## Court Watch

Court Watch programs have been implemented throughout the USA in a variety of formats for more than a decade. The most notable were created by special interest groups such as MADD (Mother's Against Drunk Drivers). These projects all had a common goal: to observe court rooms activities and gather data using unbiased volunteer court observers. These observations would ultimately lead to a list of the "Best Practices" to be used by the Court System, identifying those areas our judicial system effectively manage, and those areas that could be strengthened.

Effectively implementing a Court Watch Program includes the following:

- An organized system for the recruitment of volunteers
- Effective training of volunteer court observers
- Carefully designed data forms to be completed by volunteers
- Appropriate analysis of data collected

Baltimore County Department of Social Services coordinated this project. In Baltimore County we were fortunate to attract educated, committed volunteers who were recruited, interviewed, and trained and then continued with this project for almost one year. Most volunteers had college degrees. In fact there were retired professors, nurses, lawyers, and one individual who was a NASA engineer. We also had students from area colleges. It was a diverse and effective group of professionals vested in understanding domestic violence and how our court system manages domestic violence cases. This Court Watch Project was possible because of the cooperation of the Baltimore County Court judges, clerks and bailiff's who routinely assisted our Court Watch volunteers in this project.

Almost 780 cases and 17 judges in 3 district court locations with civil and criminal dockets were observed!

We look forward to completing our analysis of the data and providing a report first to the Administrative Judge for consideration and then the Criminal Justice Coordination Council for review.

## Highlights

- The Third Annual Domestic Violence Conference was held on September 25, 2009 with more than 184 individuals from throughout Maryland in attendance. Workshops were offered on cyber stalking, abuser traits, sexual assault, strangulation. This conference received funding from Northwest Hospital and Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office.
- Six issues of the Domestic Violence newsletter were distributed to ensure effective communication in the domestic violence community.
- The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team became operational reviewing two domestic violence fatalities and one near fatality to date.
- A curriculum was developed for a Court Watch Program, ten volunteers were recruited and trained and during the course of the year 780 Protective Order Cases were observed in three District Courts.
- In an effort to raise awareness of Domestic Violence, presentations at Towson University, Goucher College, the Police Department, Foster Care, Notre Dame College, Kinship care groups (grandparents groups), Franklin High School, Landsdowne High School, Sandy Plains School and Franklin Square Hospital occurred throughout the year.
- The implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program supported the identification of 1,101 victims of domestic violence at risk of serious injury or murdered.
- The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Maryland State Board of Victim Services awarded Stephen Roscher, Assistant States Attorney the Henry Gleim Memorial Award for his leadership, contributions and in his work and in the community and Marci Van De Mark, Assistant Director, Department of Social Services the Ginny Mahoney Memorial Award for leadership in advancing the victims rights movement.

# State Legislative Initiatives

## State Advocacy

Seven domestic violence bills on the MNADV Legislative Agenda were passed by the 2010 Maryland General Assembly.

- **HB 1382/SB 554 ▪ Rental Housing – Protection for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**
- **HB 534/SB 867 ▪ Domestic Violence – Protective Order – Extension**
- **HB 106/SB 248 ▪ Civil Cases – Maryland Legal Services Corporation Fund – Surcharges**
- **HB 60/SB 618 ▪ Criminal Procedure – Violation of Pretrial or Post Trial Release No Contact Order – Expedited Hearing**
- **HB 665 ▪ Domestic Violence - Conditions of Probation - Order to Carry or Wear a Global Positioning System Device**
- **HB 1336 ▪ Washington County - Domestic Violence - GPS Tracking System Pilot Program for Offenders**
- **SB 22/HB 905 ▪ Criminal Law - Prohibitions on Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms – Exceptions**

## Bills Supported by MNADV

### ***HB 1382/SB 554 ▪ Rental Housing – Protection for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault***

Allows for qualifying tenants, citizens dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault, to terminate leases upon sufficient proof of domestic violence or sexual assault; requires landlords of qualifying tenants to change the locks on the dwelling of qualifying tenants upon request and proof of domestic violence or sexual assault; enables qualifying tenants to assert a defense in evictions where qualifying tenants have sufficient proof of domestic violence or sexual assault; prohibits discrimination against persons with status as victims of domestic violence or sexual assault in renting residences.

*Governor expected to sign both bills.*

### ***HB 534/SB 867 ▪ Domestic Violence – Protective Order – Extension***

Extends the term of a civil order of protection in instances when the respondent re-abuses the person eligible for relief during the term of the civil order of protection. Provides for the court to extend relief up to five years after a hearing where the court considers factors outlined in the bill, including the nature and severity of the re-abuse.

*Both bills passed their own chambers. Governor expected to sign both bills.*

### ***HB 106/SB 248 ▪ Civil Cases – Maryland Legal Services Corporation Fund – Surcharges***

Increases the surcharge in civil cases in both circuit and district courts to fund the civil legal services delivery system for low income Marylanders. Legal representation for domestic violence victims in domestic violence programs are funded through grants from the MLSC.

*Governor expected to sign SB 248.*

## **Other Bills of Interest**

### ***HB 60/SB 618* ▪ **Criminal Procedure – Violation of Pretrial or Post Trial Release No Contact Order – Expedited Hearing (“Alexis’s Law”)****

Permits alleged victim, pre-trial services representative, or State’s Attorney to request an expedited hearing before the district or Circuit Courts in situations where the alleged victim asserts that a defendant has violated the no contact provision of a pretrial or posttrial order.

*Governor expected to sign.*

### ***HB 665* ▪ **Domestic Violence - Conditions of Probation - Order to Carry or Wear a Global Positioning System Device****

Authorizes a court, when placing on probation a defendant who has been convicted of a specified crime of domestic violence, to order the defendant to carry or wear a global positioning system device as a condition of probation.

*Governor expected to sign.*

### ***HB 1336* ▪ **Washington County - Domestic Violence - GPS Tracking System Pilot Program for Offenders****

Authorizes Washington County to implement a global positioning satellite (GPS) tracking system pilot program that requires, as a condition of pretrial release on charges of violating a protective order, that a defendant be supervised by electronic monitoring as a condition of bail, and requiring a court, if it suspends a specific sentence, to make electronic monitoring a condition of probation for the duration of the order.

*Governor expected to sign.*

### ***SB 22/HB 905* ▪ **Criminal Law - Prohibitions on Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms – Exceptions****

Clarifies procedure for transporting a weapon when surrendering it under a protective order.

*Governor expected to sign both bills.*

## Key Organizations

Adelante Familia  
3734 Eastern Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Baltimore / Carroll Co. Sexual Assault  
Domestic Violence Hotline  
910 Wise Avenue extended  
Baltimore, MD 21219

Baltimore County Department of  
Social Services  
Drumcastle Government Center  
6401 York Road  
Baltimore, MD 21212

Baltimore County Police Department  
Young & Community Resources  
700 East Joppa Road  
Towson, MD 21204

Baltimore County Sheriff Department  
County Courts Building  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

Baltimore County States Attorney's Office  
Family Violence Unit  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Chana  
Associate Kreiger Building  
101 West Mt. Royal Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Division of Parole / Probation  
8914 Kelso Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21221

Family & Children's Services  
7000 Security Blvd.  
Suite 302  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Family Crisis Center  
P.O. Box 3909  
Baltimore, MD 21222

Family Services  
Circuit Court for Baltimore County  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

Domestic Violence Program  
Northwest Hospital  
5401 Old Court Road  
Randallstown, MD 21133

House of Ruth  
2201 Argonne Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21218

Jewish Family Services  
6 Park Center Court  
Suite 211  
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Legal Aid Bureau  
29 West Susquehanna Avenue  
Suite 305  
Towson, MD 21204

MAAR, Inc.  
P.O. Box 32  
Riderwood, MD 21139

TurnAround Inc.  
401 Washington Avenue  
Suite 300  
Towson, MD 21204

Women's Law Center of Maryland  
305 West Chesapeake Avenue  
Suite 201  
Towson, MD 21204

# Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team

## Chapter II

### Introduction

On July 1, 2005, Maryland became the 21<sup>st</sup> state to legislate domestic violence fatality review. HB 741, entitled "Local Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams," unanimously passed the legislature. The bill, codified, under Title 4, Subtitle 7, of the Family Law Article, provides for confidentiality and liability protections. It was through the guidance of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV), under a grant from the Violence Against Women Office, that teams in Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties were begun in 2003 and 2004, respectively. These teams continue to serve as models and were instrumental in developing the legislation that supported the organization of the Baltimore County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.

In 2007, under the auspices of Baltimore County Department of Social Services, a Fatality Review Team was convened. Protocols were developed, reviewed, and approved with the Team then identifying the first domestic violence fatality to review in 2009. As of the writing of this report a thorough review and analysis has occurred for two fatalities and one near fatality.

The goal of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team is to prevent intimate partner homicides and reduce the incidence of domestic violence in our community. By better understanding the life of the victim, the circumstances that led to her/his death, we hope to strengthen our response to future victims. The Team reviews and analyzes selected domestic violence cases resulting in a fatality, or near fatality, with the purpose of:

- Identifying gaps in service.
- Recognizing patterns that may indicate escalating violence and the threat of death.
- Assess the current responses of the criminal justice and social services systems to domestic violence victims.
- Promote support, cooperation, and communication among agencies.
- Formulate findings and recommendations aimed at improving the community system of prevention and intervention.

This Team looks to strengthen our response to domestic violence. It is our intent to prevent future injuries and fatalities in our community!

Following is a roster of all the members of this Team who have reviewed the horrific details of domestic violence homicides, viewed videoed interviews and police reports to try to better understand the perpetrator, met with family members and as a Team a near fatality survivor analyzed information from any and all organizations involved in the life of the victim, all in the hopes of developing recommendations to improve our delivery of services to victims and to ensure offenders are held responsible. Many thanks to them for their commitment of time, energy and expertise in identifying "Findings" and "Recommendations". And a special thanks to all our community partners, who when advised of strategies to improve service delivery, responded affirmatively and quickly creating a more safe community.

**Marci Van De Mark**  
Chair

**Rosalyn Branson**  
Vice-Chair

# Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team

## II. Team Roster

### **Adelante Familia**

Flor Giusti, Director  
3734 Eastern Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21224

### **Baltimore County Department of Aging**

Joanne Williams, Director  
611 Central Ave.  
Towson, MD 21204

### **Representative**

Laura Riley –Deputy Director

### **Baltimore County Department of Corrections**

James O’Neill, Director  
720 Bosley Ave  
Towson, MD 21204

### **Representative**

Sharon Tyler, Program Manager

### **Baltimore County Department of Social Services**

Timothy Griffith, Director  
6401 York Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21212

### **Representatives**

Marci Van De Mark  
Assistant Director

Karen Keyser  
Family Violence Coordinator

### **Baltimore County Health Department**

Dr. Gregory Branch, Chief  
Health Officer  
6401 York Road  
Baltimore, MD, 21212

### **Representatives**

Robert Blankfeld  
Deputy Director of Bureau of  
Behavioral Health

Dave Goldman  
Director of Behavioral Health

### **Baltimore County Police Department**

J.W. Johnson, Chief of Police  
700 E Joppa Rd  
Towson, MD 21204

### **Representatives**

Major William Kalista  
Community Resource Division  
Commander

Officer Sharon McKenzie  
Community Resource Division

Lt. James Monahan  
CID Persons

Major Mark Warren  
Community Resource Division

### **Baltimore County Office of State’s Attorney**

Scott Shellenberger, State’s  
Attorney  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

### **Representatives**

Stephen Roscher  
Assistant State’s Attorney

Michelle Samoryk  
Assistant State’s Attorney

**Baltimore County Sheriff's Office**

R. Jay Fisher, Sheriff  
401 Bosley Ave.  
Towson, MD 21204

***Representative***

Colonel Robert A. Haukdal

**Department of Juvenile Services**

James McClafferty, Area Director  
Central Region  
Towson Office  
308 Washington Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

***Representative***

Celena Falline  
Assistant Regional Director, Central

**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services**

Division of Parole and Probation  
Patrick McGee – Director  
6776 Reisterstown Road  
Baltimore, MD 21215

***Representatives***

Joe Clocker  
Regional Administrator

Thomas McGrain  
Field Supervisor

**Family & Children's Services**

Patricia Thompson, District Director  
3104 Lord Baltimore Dr.  
Suite 206  
Baltimore, MD 21044

**Family Crisis Center**

Douglas Murphy, Executive/Clinical Director  
P.O. Box 3909  
Baltimore, MD 21222

**Northwest Hospital**

Audrey, Bergin, Coordinator  
Family Violence Program  
5401 Old Court Road  
Randallstown, MD 21133

**Rosalyn Berkowitz, RN, BSN**

Family Violence Program  
Nurse Consultant  
5401 Old Court Road  
Randallstown, MD 21133

**TurnAround Inc.**

Rosalyn Branson, Executive Director  
401 Washington Ave., Suite 300  
Towson, MD 21204

### III. Findings and Recommendations

#### Gaps in Service:

**Finding #1:** When there is a domestic violence fatality there is not a consistent outreach effort to surviving family members, parents, children, spouse, or extended family to offer information on community resources to help individuals manage their loss. Of particular concern are children who have witnessed violence in the home and/or the fatality itself.

**Recommendation:** *To designate an organization or process to best identify and connect with the surviving family members of a domestic violence fatality.*

**Team Plan:** Develop a brochure identifying resources for grieving family and friends of the deceased.  
Identify local funeral homes with whom to develop partnerships.  
Identify the organization that oversees licensing of funeral homes and directors.  
Establish a training protocol for funeral home staff.  
Karen Keyser will coordinate this effort with the assistance of Sharon McKenzie and Pat Thompson.  
Roz Berkowitz will assist with electronic linkage to the Medical Examiners website.

**Timeline:** December 2010: Karen Keyser will meet with Funeral Home Operators by December 31, 2010  
January 2011: Final copy of the brochure will be ready for distribution.

**Status:** In Process

**Finding #2:** When a victim relocates due to domestic violence he/she may not communicate that move to the local Domestic Violence Coordinator (DVC) or Service Provider. The history of violence may be lost with the new address placing the victim at greater risk of serious injury or fatality.

**Recommendation:** *Develop a protocol to coordinate services and better facilitate the sharing of information when a victim relocates.*

*Emphasize to victims of domestic violence the importance of notifying the police precinct or other involved agencies of his/her relocation plans.*

*Educate victims of domestic violence about VINE and advise them to keep address, phone number, and email as up to date as possible in this system. All victims should be advised to register.*

**Team Plan:** Develop a “When I Move” brochure to be distributed by the Baltimore County Police Domestic Violence Coordinators (DVC’s). The “When I Move” brochure will be included in victim packets for distribution by DVC during home visits.

When DVC’s prepare to visit a home for the first time they will conduct a search of the history of domestic violence related calls at that address.

The Baltimore County Police Department will develop a “Change of Address” card for victims of domestic violence as an internal alert tool for distribution.

Officer Sharon McKenzie will coordinate this project

**Timeline:** Full implementation is planned for March 2011.  
December 2010: The brochure will be ready for distribution

**Status:** In Process

**Finding #3:** **Police may respond to “Calls for Service” at a single address, involving the same intimate partners, spanning a short period of time, but may not intervene if they are non-criminal in nature.**

**Recommendation:** *DVC’s will research Calls for Service to determine if there is a history of repeated domestic violence incidents or abuse reports when scheduling a home visit, to determine if early intervention is required.*

**Team Plan:** Major Mark Warren will ask the DVC's to look at this issue over a 6-month period of time and report back to the Team. Everyone agreed the focus should be on prevention and keeping non-criminal incidents from becoming a criminal offense.

The DVC's will obtain and track addresses for repeated contact.

**Timeline:** Major Warren will report the findings of the DVC's at the January 2011 meeting to assess if further Team action is indicated.

**Status:** January 2011: To Be Reviewed

**Finding #4:** **The background information provided on a suspect to the Court system promoting victim safety requires consistency. \***

**Recommendation:** *Baltimore County Police officers be trained to print pertinent information from the DVC's database for inclusion in the Court paperwork for both bail hearings and bail reviews.*

**Team Plan:** This is a training issue for the Baltimore County Police Department. The DVC's will meet with the precinct officers to insure they have access to the Coordinators' database.

Sharon Tyler, Program Manager will review pre-trial data to determine if the information included in the arrest packet is being considered by the Court when setting bail. Sharon can speak with pre-trial investigators to assess when/if information is impacting a bail being increased, decreased, denied, or no effect.

Under review will be the need to discuss bail review hearings with the Administrative Judge after the first of the year.

**Timeline:** Review in 2011

**Status:** In Process

\*Bail is not about a specific calculation, but often a professional judgment about the information that is brought before the Court. Bail is often determined by prior failure to appear, evidence of an active protective order, criminal history, and a no contact provision with the victim. A Judge can consider any information that is presented to them, but may not comment on how it impacts on their decision to impose bail.

**Finding #5:** **Victims of Domestic Violence are not always granted Protective Orders and therefore do not receive victim resource information.**

**Recommendation:** *To establish a procedure for Victim Advocates to be in court during Civil Protective Orders. The Victim Advocate will attempt contact with persons who were denied the Protective Order and provide information and referral to local domestic violence Service Providers.*

**Team Plan** Develop a handout for victims that will outline safety planning and possible next steps in the absence of a Protective Order. There is a need to identify why Protective Orders are denied.

1. Identify reasons/causes: Poor victim's testimony/statements; lack of evidence, etc., find causes and see if they can be addressed.

Safety planning will be the focus when working with a victim under these circumstances. All Victim Advocates will be trained on this new procedure.

Service Providers will determine a standardized way of distributing a brochure and training staff on this issue.

Karen Keyser, DV Coordinator will take the lead in developing the brochure.

**Timeline:** January 2011: A draft of the brochure will be distributed at the meeting.

February 2011: Domestic Violence Service Providers will provide training to Victim Advocates.

**Status:** In Process

**Finding #6:** **A Suspect leaves the scene of a domestic incident or abuse prior to the arrival of the police, therefore creating a void in information gathering. The responding officer will not have all the information pertaining to a domestic violence history. \***

**Recommendation:** *Determine if there is a need for written protocols to guide the Police Officer in this situation.*

***Team Plan:*** Look at existing Police guidelines on this issue and determine if they require updating.

The Baltimore County Police Department will address this recommendation as a training issue between the DVC's and the officers in the precincts.

***Timeline:*** January 2011: Major Mark Warren will review with the Team.

***Status:*** In Process

\*The following guidelines are in place in Baltimore County:

Domestic abuses of a criminal nature are handled differently by police than domestic incidents of a non-criminal nature. For non-criminal cases, where a couple merely had an argument, the investigating officer may not feel the need to interview the party that leaves the scene. This is especially true if the complainant is also the "victim" and tells the police that he/she is okay now because it wasn't a big deal, or they're glad the other party left, etc. In those situations where it is clear that it is a non-criminal, non-violent event, the reporting officer always retains the discretion to interview the other party if necessary.

In criminal domestic abuses where the suspect leaves the scene, it is much more important that the entire incident be documented, so in many cases the reporting officer will interview the suspect to get that side of the story and insure that that party is okay. Even so, the responding officer may be told by the victim that interviewing the suspect that left the scene may re-ignite the situation. The officers MUST have the discretion to balance the investigative requirements against the wishes of the victim. There may be circumstances where follow-up with the suspect is simply not advisable, so a requirement for such follow-up should not be implemented.

### **Coordinated Community Response:**

**Finding #1:** Recent studies on domestic violence found that 97% of abuse victims considered their religion or faith a "significant aspect" of their lives and nearly half of those had contact with their faith leaders about the abuse. However, only 2% of those victims had contact with a domestic violence service provider.

**Recommendation:** Recruit Baltimore County active religious leader to serve on the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.

**Team Plan:** Karen Keyser, DV Coordinator will send letters of introduction to members of the faith-based communities requesting interested parties to submit resumes for review by the Team.

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** In Process.

**Finding #2:** **To strengthen the diversity of the Team, membership should include individuals who are either a family member of a homicide victim or surviving victim of either a serious injury or near fatality.**

**Recommendation:** *Recruit a family member of a domestic violence fatality or surviving victim of a near fatality to serve as a member of the Team.*

**Team Plan:** Local Domestic Violence Service Providers will make recommendations of potential community members who may be available and willing to serve on the Team.

Rosalyn Branson, Executive Director and/or a clinician from TurnAround, Inc. will meet with potential candidates prior to recommending membership on the Team.

The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Chairperson, Marci Van De Mark, will conduct the new Team Member orientation.

**Status:** October 2010: To be Completed

January 2011: Marci Van De Mark will complete an orientation for new Team Members.

**Finding #3:** **To strengthen the expertise of the Team, membership should include medical personnel who are familiar with the domestic violence related injuries.**

**Recommendation:** *Recruit a member of the medical community to serve as a member of the Team.*

**Team Plan:** The Team reviewed a resume from a forensic nurse. The Team decided she would be an ideal candidate and agreed to offer her membership on the Team.

**Timeline:**

**Status:** Completed.

**Finding #4:** **To strengthen the role of the Team, membership should be reviewed to include State agencies who serve the Baltimore County community.**

**Recommendation:** *Identify State agencies, located in Baltimore County, not represented by membership on the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team.*

**Team Plan:** The Team reached out to the Maryland State Department of Juvenile Services and the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation and requested a representative and designee to be appointed to the Team.

**Timeline:** June 2010: Mr. Thomas McGrain, Division of Parole and Probation, completed the new Team Member orientation with Marci Van De Mark.

July 2010: Mr. James McClafferty, Department of Juvenile Services, will join the Team. Mr. McClafferty has designated Ms. Celena Falline to represent him on the Team.

January 2011: Marci Van De Mark will complete an orientation for new Team Members.  
The Team will review the possibility of offering Team membership to survivors.

**Status:** In Process

