

Harford County, Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Annual Report, 2011

On October 29, 2009, the Harford County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team held the first team meeting. During the meeting, the proposed team protocol was discussed and approved by all partnering agencies committing full participation and consistent representation to Review Team meetings. As a result of that community commitment, one domestic violence fatality case was fully reviewed in 2010-2011. Based on this case review, the following concerns and suggested recommendations were identified.

Harford County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Participating Agencies

- **Circuit Court of Harford County**
- **Harford County Animal Control**
- **Harford County Department of Parole and Probation**
- **Harford County Department of Social Services**
- **Harford County Government**
- **Harford County Sheriff's Office**
- **Harford County State's Attorneys Office**
- **Harford County Health Department**
- **Harford County Public Schools**
- **Legal Aid**
- **Mountain Christian Church**
- **Office on Mental Health**
- **SARC**
- **Upper Chesapeake Health System**

HARFORD COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM 2011 RECOMMENDATIONS

Harford County Specific Recommendations:

1. System Gap: Victims are not adequately educated on result of plea bargains in murder/attempted murder cases
 - Recommendations:
 - SAO takes time to educate victims surrounding meaning of plea bargain and potential outcomes
 - Involve Parole and Probation in information sharing
 - Invite victim to have support present in plea bargain discussion meeting
 - Have victim meet with the prosecutor of case, not a designee, for this meeting.
 - Needed intervention: Training component for SAO and Victim Witness Unit Personnel

- TIME FRAME: 90 days
 - Update: Training completed January 2012
2. System Gap: Victims' place of employment may inadvertently become dangerous due to abuser's knowledge of the location
 - Recommendations: (hospital specific)
 - Established Workplace Violence Committee
 - Job placement assistance in order to transfer units or hospitals
 - Proactively assess staff for domestic violence signs
 - Needed Intervention: Management training for compassion and domestic violence education/risk assessment
 - TIME FRAME: 6 months
 - Barb to meet with Workplace Violence Committee to discuss further training needs and schedule training dates.
 3. System Gap: Victim's are fearful for pets safety and therefore may be less likely to leave abusive home
 - Recommendations:
 - Expand current SARC Safehaven for Pets program
 - Needed Intervention: Expand service to include offer of pet shelter to all clients of SARC
 - TIME FRAME: N/A—Accomplished
 - Beginning Sept 15th, all clients who are receiving services are SARC are eligible for the Safehaven for Pets Program

MD Recommendations:

1. System Gap: Many victims cannot afford the cost of relocation and there are limited financial resources to access
 - Recommendation: Have established funding resource to assist those fleeing from their homes due to imminent danger.
2. System Gap: Information between hospitals does not occur, which allows victims to go from hospital to hospital without having connection of visits addressed.
 - Recommendation: Have computerized hospital sharing in order to better assist victims who may go to different hospitals with injuries
3. System Gap: Abusers make bail after their arrest in a short time period, causing time constraints for victims who may want/need to flee their homes
 - Recommendation: Slow the bail process to require 24 hour holding before bail reviews are held.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

1. System Gap: Clergy may not be adequately trained in domestic violence dynamics
 - Recommendations:
 - Clergy in Harford County should receive regular trainings in order to respond to those seeking assistance who are in domestic violence relationships.
 - Needed Intervention: DVPC to organize training for Harford County Clergy
 - SARC coordinator to discuss at next DVPC meeting

2. System Gap: Trainings for RN's do not include regular DV education
 - Recommendations:
 - Yearly in-service trainings on domestic violence
 - Needed Intervention: Contact Education Department at hospital for partnership with SARC to conduct training
 - Barb Baughman to provide contact information so that SARC staff can follow up with trainings.