



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Milwaukee County

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**Milwaukee County Public Safety Officials Implement
Specialized Domestic Violence Lethality Assessment Tool**

The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office and police departments throughout Milwaukee County, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Justice, are strengthening the law enforcement response to domestic violence by implementing a Lethality Assessment Program (LAP).

The LAP is an evidence based tool used to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partners. This investigative tool was developed by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, and includes a particularized assessment of a domestic violence victim that helps first responders refer domestic abuse victims to the appropriate supportive services based on the unique circumstances of victims at particularly great risk of death or serious harm.

The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has ten attorneys who prosecute nothing but domestic violence cases in three dedicated domestic violence courts. The unit is supported by victim advocates and other support staff. In support of the LAP initiative, District Attorney John Chisholm stated, "It is critical to engage with domestic abuse survivors as comprehensively as possible in order to give them and their children the support and protection they need."

Cudahy Police Chief Tom Poellet was instrumental in bringing LAP to Milwaukee County, along with Assistant District Attorney Peter Tempelis, head of the District Attorney's domestic violence unit. Said Chief Poellet, "Intimate partner domestic violence work is homicide prevention work. The LAP allows law enforcement to partner with community resources to save lives and keep people safe."

Sojourner Family Peace Center is also a partner in this project, as the largest provider of domestic violence services in the State of Wisconsin. Executive Director Carmen Pitre stated, "Understanding lethality is critical to our work with clients and their safety. The LAP program and our continued partnership with law enforcement will allow us to implement a structured risk assessment process that will help to identify victims who are at the highest risk of injury and lethality."

On December 2nd and 3rd, eighty public safety and domestic violence professionals will undergo training on how to implement the Lethality Assessment Program in Milwaukee County. The training will take place at the Sheriff's Training Academy in Franklin.

For more information, please contact Chief Deputy District Attorney Kent Lovern at kent.lovern@da.wi.gov.

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