APRIL 24, 2020 Albany, NY

In Face of a Dangerous Uptick of Domestic Violence Incidents, Governor Cuomo Announces New Domestic Violence Text Program and New Confidential Online Service to Aid Victims of Abuse and Provide Potential Lifesaving Ways to Get Help

DV Reports Overall are up 30 Percent in April Compared to Last Year and Incident Calls to State Have Increased 15 Percent in March Compared to Last Year

New Yorkers in Need of Help or Assistance Can Text 844-997-2121 or Can Go to the New Confidential Online Site to Reach a Professional on www.opdv.ny.gov

New Text Program and Confidential Online Service Will Make it Easier for Victims Who are Isolated with Their Abuser to Get Help

Text and Online Service Will Be Staffed 24/7 by Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Staff Who Are Experts in Area of Domestic Violence

In the face of a dangerous uptick of domestic violence incidents, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the immediate modernization of the state's domestic violence hotline with a new text program and confidential online service to aid victims of abuse and provide potential

lifesaving ways to get help. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary social distancing guidelines, domestic violence victims are even more vulnerable and unsafe while isolated at home without being able to get away from their abuser and there has been a reported uptick in the number of domestic violence cases in the state. Calls to the state's domestic violence hotline are up 30 percent in April compared to last year and calls increased 18 percent from February to March 2020. State Police also report domestic violence incident calls were up 15 percent in March compared to last year.

For many victims, making a phone call to get help or accessing services may be impossible because their abuser can easily monitor their calls. The new text program and confidential online service will make it easier for these victims in isolation to contact the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and get the help they need.

New Yorkers seeking help can text 844-997-2121 or chat with a professional on the new confidential website at www.opdv.ny.gov. The text and online services will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with OPDV staff who are experts in the area of domestic violence.

"New Yorkers are living through an unimaginably stressful period and we're seeing signs that domestic violence is on the rise as victims are stuck at home with their abusers and unable to access the help they need," Governor Cuomo said. "We've been working with state agencies to help address this issue and provide more resources, and this new text program and confidential online service will help make it easier for victims to get the help they need and get out of potentially dangerous situations."

"The reality is that abuse victims are often closely surveilled by their abuser," **Melissa DeRosa, Secretary to the Governor and Chair of the New York State Council on Women and Girls, said.** "In New York, no one should be at risk because they can't find a way to make their need for help known. The text and online confidential service programs we are rolling out today will provide additional and better methods for victims of domestic violence to get the help and intervention they need when they need it."

Since NYS on PAUSE went into effect, OPDV and many state agency partners have been working diligently to pursue strategies for putting safety information in front of victims in places that such information would not normally be available, including on social media

accounts of public utilities or tax/finance. Additionally, major efforts have been underway to get safety flyers with the Hotline number hung up in essential retailers, such as grocery stores, pharmacies and home repair stores, among others.

Contact the Governor's Press Office

Contact us by phone:

Albany: (518) 474 - 8418

New York City: (212) 681 - 4640

Contact us by email:

Press.Office@exec.ny.gov