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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN CALLS ATTENTION TO THE PREVALENCE OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Encourages Teens to Develop and Practice Positive, Healthy Dating Practices

Chicago — In recognition of Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, Attorney General Lisa Madigan is using this Valentine's Day weekend to remind young couples about the importance of healthy dating relationships as reports show an increase in dating violence in the Chicago area and its prevalence around Illinois.

"When people think of domestic violence, they usually think of it as a crime between adults. But in reality, domestic violence doesn't have a minimum age requirement. It affects people of all ages, including teenagers," Attorney General Madigan said. "We need to educate young men and women that abusive behavior in a dating relationship is always wrong."

Madigan said teen dating violence is on the rise in the Chicago area. An estimated 19 percent of Chicago area high school students reported being hit, slapped or physically hurt by their significant other, according to a 2009 study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). That rate is more than double the national average (9.8%) and an increase since 2007 from 13 percent of Chicago students reporting violence in their relationship. Statewide, Madigan said almost 14 percent of teens reported violent dating behavior, according to the CDC. Interestingly, boys and girls reported experiencing teen dating violence in similar numbers.

Madigan encouraged teens, parents and educators who witness or experience teen dating violence to reach out for help, starting with resources available on the Attorney General's website at <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/communities/youthadvocacy/help.html>. The site includes warning signs, strategies and tips, as well as links to websites created to work with youth to end the culture of violence and encourage activism to stop teen dating violence.

Warning Signs for Parents: Is your teen a victim of dating violence?

- Does your teen exhibit unusual or extreme moodiness or withdraw from the family?
- Has your teen stopped seeing friends or given up favorite activities?
- Is your teen spending all her time with her boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Does your teen's boyfriend or girlfriend call very often?
- Is your teen falling behind in school?
- Is your teen afraid to break up with her boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Does your teen have unexplained injuries?

Questions for Teens

Does your friend's significant other

- call them names or put them down?
- act extremely jealous when they talk to other people?
- always check up on them, calling or paging all the time?
- lose their temper, throw or break things when they're mad?

Does your friend

- always apologize for their behavior?
- always worry about making their significant other angry?
- cancel plans at the last minute?

- give up things that used to be important to them, like friends or activities?
- have injuries they can't explain?

-30-

[Return to February 2011 Press Releases](#)



TOP