

# Crime Victim Services News

Volume 2, Issue 2

October 2007

Welcome to the Illinois Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division e-newsletter. In this bimonthly publication you will find information about our programs and upcoming events. If you have any questions about our services, you can call our toll free number, **800 -228-3368**.

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## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

When people think about domestic abuse, they often – and correctly so – associate it with violence and even death. However, there is an underreported and increasingly prevalent type of abuse that doesn't result in visible cuts or bruises, yet causes victims great pain. Many victims of physical, sexual and verbal abuse *are also subject to economic abuse*. Economic abuse is a tactic often used to control relationships, isolate women and maintain power by preventing access to money and/or other financial resources.

Approximately 6 out of 10 Americans strongly agree that lack of money and a steady income is a huge obstacle faced by a domestic violence survivor when trying to leave the abuser. Sometimes financial concerns and stability are central to a domestic violence victim's ability to live a financially secure life free from an abusive situation.

Here are some strategies for victims planning to leave abusive situations:

- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799- SAFE to find a domestic violence program where you can learn about resources, such as emergency assistance funds, shelter, public benefits and affordable housing.
- Get a copy of your credit report and monitor your credit often. You can request a free copy at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or (877) 322-8228. Most financial institutions also provide low-cost credit-monitoring services.
- Open a post office box—and change your mailing address—for any financial information you may receive before or after you leave an abusive situation. You can get one from the U.S. Postal Service or vendors including Parcel Plus or the UPS Store.
- Contact financial institutions and utility companies, including your cell-phone service, to secure your private information with new PIN codes and passwords. Change ATM and debit-card PIN codes and the passwords for e-mail and online banking accounts.
- Make necessary changes to your insurance plans, will or trust beneficiaries, appointing a new person if your abuser used to be your designee.

### The following events are taking place in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month:

“Sacred Insights”: Apna Ghar Art Therapy Exhibit. The art in this exhibit was created by domestic violence survivors on their road to healing.

Oct. 6, 4:30-8pm; Oct. 7, 12-5pm, Located at 6932 N. Glenwood Ave. in Chicago, IL

Safe Passage's Domestic Violence Vigil: “Peace in the Home”

Oct. 1, 6:30pm, Located in the Dekalb Area Women's Center, 1021 State, Dekalb, IL

## National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards Annual Conference: "A New World in Victim Services"

The **2007 VOCA National Training Conference** was held in historic Williamsburg, Virginia, as America marked the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its first permanent colonial settlement in Jamestown. The conference was held from September 17-21, 2007, and was sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime. Several members of the Illinois Crime Victim Compensation staff and the Illinois Court of Claims joined other State VOCA Victim Assistance and Crime Victim Compensation managers, staff and Board members from all across the country.

During this exciting week, conference attendees came together to share up-to-date information to improve the effectiveness and results of their respective programs. Participants attended many different workshops that focused on the knowledge, experience and strategies to better serve victims of crime. Workshops included: New Uses of Technology in Compensation Programs, Successful Partnerships with Law Enforcement, Domestic Violence Dynamics, OVC Training Strategies, Civil Remedies for Crime Victims and Americans Victimized Abroad.

## Exercising Your Constitutional Rights: The Right to Restitution

Victims of violent crime have a constitutional and statutory right to restitution in Illinois. Restitution includes actual out-of-pocket expenses, losses, damages, and injuries suffered by the victim named in the charge. It also includes out-of-pocket expenses, losses, damages, and injuries to other "victims" if proximately caused by the same criminal conduct of the defendant. For example, the court may order restitution be paid to the doctor who treated the victim's injuries or the Department of Public Aid that provides counseling services. Restitution does not include pain and suffering.

Trial courts should order restitution regardless of the defendant's ability to pay and the length or term of any incarceration ordered. Even if payment of restitution may seem unlikely, it should be ordered because an offender may inherit money, win the lottery or receive some other windfall. At sentencing, courts should specify the amount of restitution. The offender's ability to pay is relevant to the setting of a payment amount and schedule. Restitution is considered a penalty against the defendant, and may be imposed as a condition of probation, or of conditional discharge.

The Code of Corrections creates enforcement mechanisms for the collection of restitution. It provides that a restitution order is a judgment lien in favor of the victim that attaches to the defendant's property, a lien which is similar to a judgment lien in a civil lawsuit. It authorizes a trial court to enter an order of withholding to collect restitution. The trial court also has discretion to order the offender's bail bond funds be applied to restitution.

## Compensation Tips For Dentists

In addition to the costly medical, hospital and counseling expenses, victims often require emergency and/or follow-up dental care after a crime is committed against them. Dentists can benefit from the Crime Victim Compensation program and help victims of violent crime at the same time.

As a dentist, there are important tips to keep in mind:

- There are many factors that the crime victim compensation program must consider when determining if a victim is eligible to receive compensation. The compensation staff will spend time sorting out the details of the crime. All you need to do is have the victim fill out the application.
- Crime Victim Compensation is a reimbursement program for out-of-pocket expenses that have been incurred. We are unable to provide any up-front money. Dental work must be performed before our program is able to make payments. If the victim has paid any dental expenses, they will be reimbursed for their payment. In addition, if there is any outstanding balance with the dentist's office, the Act allows the State of Illinois to pay the provider directly.

## Upcoming Events

**Pediatric SANE training**  
**October 1-5**  
**Des Plaines, IL**

**Contact Julie Garner-Teno**  
**217-557-8135**

**Advanced Illinois Victim Assistance Academy**  
**October 16-18**  
**Bloomington, IL**

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