Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention Releases New Recommendations for Medical Radiographic Imaging in Non-Fatal Strangulation Assaults

Fort Worth, TX – October 18, 2016 – Christine was choked repeatedly by her partner during their relationship and is now suffering lifelong health issues because of his abuse. She did not receive needed medical evaluation until years later. She will tell her story Wednesday morning in Fort Worth, Texas at a national four-day training on the handling of non-fatal and near-fatal strangulation assaults being held at One Safe Place, one of the largest Family Justice Centers in America - where more than 30 agencies work together to serve survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse, and human trafficking. During the training for 70 police officers, prosecutors, advocates, doctors, and nurses this week, the Alliance’s Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention is releasing new Medical Radiographic Imaging Recommendations for hospitals and medical providers across the United States.

"When a victim of non-fatal strangulation presents to the emergency department it is critical for the medical provider to rule-out potential life-threatening injuries," said William Smock, M.D. the Police Surgeon for the Louisville Metro Police Department and the Chair of the Institute's Medical Advisory Board. The Board today, with unanimous support from their expert physicians, released Medical Radiographic Imaging Recommendations,
based on the latest medical literature, for hospitals and medical providers across America. "The goals of the recommendations include calling for doctors to evaluate the carotid and vertebral arteries for injuries, the bony/cartilaginous and soft tissue neck structure, and the brain for anoxic injuries," said Dr. Smock. "The recommendations have already been implemented and adopted by more than 100 hospitals and academic emergency medicine programs around the world," said Dr. Smock.

"We did not know for many years how serious non-fatal strangulation assaults were. We did not realize that petechial hemorrhage, unconsciousness, urination or defecation during the assault, visual changes, and other neurological signs and symptoms meant imaging of the neck should be considered immediately by medical providers to rule out life-threatening injuries," said Gael Strack, the founder of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the CEO of Alliance for HOPE International. "Sadly, many victims suffer lifelong impacts and have never been given the medical treatment they deserve," said Strack.

"We have failed so many victims for so many years and some have died because of the failure of medical professionals to properly evaluate their condition after strangulation assaults," said former San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn Esq. and President of Alliance for HOPE International. "We must stop failing them NOW. We need hospitals and medical providers to start treating these assaults like other types of life-threatening incidents," said Gwinn.

Download the Medical Radiographic Imaging Recommendations here:

The Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention is a program of Alliance for HOPE International. The Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice to provide proactive basic and advanced strangulation training to professionals, along with resource and support programs to increase education and current training tools to aid strangulation victims. This project is supported all or in part by Grant No.2014-TA-AK-K008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

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