With Nation’s Attention on Domestic Violence, Wisconsin Homicide Report Released

55 Domestic Violence Deaths in State in 2013*

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Madison — End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin released a report today that documents the domestic abuse fatalities from 2013.

“Domestic violence thrives when it is hidden,” said Patti Seger, executive director of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. “Through the Ray Rice video, the public has seen one example of a much larger problem. We hope this Report helps Wisconsin better understand the extent of this epidemic—and the life and death consequences of domestic violence. On average, about one person a week loses her or his life to domestic violence in Wisconsin. These preventable tragedies occur with regularity in every corner of our state.”

More Help Needed

Advocates want the attention being paid to domestic violence to translate to a commitment to assist every victim of domestic violence who might be in a dangerous situation.

“The stories included in the report demonstrate that we can do more to prevent domestic violence homicides,” explained Seger. “In many cases, we have solutions, but we don’t always have the resources to connect victims in need with the support and services that keep them safe.”

A recent long range plan by End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin and the Governor’s Council on Domestic Abuse reported that every day in Wisconsin about 250 requests for help from victims and their children go unmet because of a lack of resources. The plan also cited evidence that victims who receive assistance are much less likely to die at the hands of an abuser. In the study, only four percent of homicide victims had previously gone to a shelter or worked with an advocate.

“Every victim who is in danger should know help is available,” said Seger. “And, every agency that provides lifesaving help to victims should be fully staffed and funded to meet the need.”
A Collection of Voices

This edition of the Report is unlike versions from previous years. End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin decided to build the report from the personal statements of a diverse group of advocates, surviving family members and other leaders. Seger says the format reflects her group’s belief that preventing domestic violence homicides requires commitment from a range community leaders and stakeholders.

Other data from the report include:

- 55 fatalities are included in the report: 39 deaths of homicide victims in 38 separate incidents, 10 suicides committed by homicide perpetrators, two suicides by domestic violence perpetrators that were committed as law enforcement arrived on the scene, and four domestic violence perpetrators who were killed by responding law enforcement officers.

  - Consistent with previous findings, firearms are still the most common means of perpetration in domestic violence homicides. In 2013, firearms were the weapon used in 51% (20) of the domestic violence homicides, excluding homicides by legal intervention. In at least seven domestic violence shooting deaths, the gunmen were legally prohibited from possessing firearms.

  - The homicides in the report demonstrate that several factors in domestic violence cases are indicators of high risk for victims. These factors include the use of a weapon or threats to use a weapon, threats to kill, stalking behavior, strangulation, obsessive jealousy and forced sex.

  - In 2013, there was a known prior history of domestic violence by the perpetrator against either the homicide victim or another person in about half of the homicide cases.

  - Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male. In 2013, 79% of perpetrators were male.

  - Victims reflected the span of life, from 6 years old to 79 years old.

The full report is available online at: http://bit.ly/2013DVReport

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