

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE PREVENTION

*Ensuring physical safety and protection, effective response and safe transition.*

## KEY SAFETY PRIORITIES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS & LOCAL DV PROGRAMS

### LETHALITY ASSESSMENT

In the past decade, at least 1,554 Pennsylvanians died as a result of domestic violence—including children, police officers, coworkers, passersby, and perpetrators who killed themselves. Identifying victims who are at highest risk of being killed by their intimate partners and connecting them with lifesaving DV services is a proven strategy to stem this loss of life.

### FIREARMS

In 2016, there were 146 domestic violence-related fatalities in Pennsylvania, with 57 of the 102 domestic violence victims (54%) dying from gunshot wounds.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Although abusers are prohibited from buying or owning firearms, a Pennsylvania loophole allows individuals to purchase long guns in private sales without background checks.

## BARRIERS IN DELIVERY OF SERVICE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

- Abusers become more controlling or violent when victims flee or seek protection from abuse
- Decisions regarding the relinquishment of firearms left to judicial discretion

## PCADV PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue the expansion of LAP programs to PA counties and implementation by State Police.
- Advocate for increased funding for voluntary LAP programs.
- Advocate for Police and Hospital Emergency personnel to have required training on Domestic Violence issues, victims and screening protocols.
- Advocate for legislation to restrict abuser's access to firearms and for strict enforcement of PFA orders.
- Advocate for legislation that requires long guns be included in background checks in private sales.
- Pursue and support legislation that increases penalties for perpetrators of domestic violence.