From:	Kathy Hughes
To:	angie newsome; asheville citizen times; associated press; barbara blake; bill mcclement; bob hunter; cibo; cibo; clarke morrison; clear channel; dale neal; david forbes; David Hurand (dhurand@wcqs.org); dawa hitch; Don Yelton; ellen; Ellen Heywood; fox carolina; g johnsen (gjohnsen@wcqs.org); jake frankel; Jerry Rice (jerry1advocate@gmail.com); jon ostendorf; lavox; mark barrett; mountain x; natalie bailey; Peggy Moody; tammy jones; The Urban News; Trudi Walend; Weaverville Tribune; wlos; wwnc radio
Subject:	Buncombe County Announces Comprehensive Plan to Address Domestic Violence
Date:	Tuesday, May 13, 2014 2:57:00 PM
Attachments:	Domestic Violence Plan Overview .pdf

For Immediate Release:

Buncombe County Government, with the help of community partners, the courts, law enforcement and local municipalities, announced the implementation of a comprehensive plan to address the growing problem of domestic violence in our community.

The ultimate goal, to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and eliminate domestic violence homicides is based on a plan modeled after the successful practices of other communities where domestic homicides have been reduced to near zero. Improving communication among many different departments, agencies and professions will lay the groundwork for the success of the plan. Cross-system communication with a focused mission will tackle the problem from multiple angles and send a clear message that ***domestic violence is not tolerated in our community***.

The plan also includes the use of **electronic monitoring** that can track the offender 24/7 and alert the victim and law enforcement if the offender goes near the victim, allowing the victim time to implement her safety plan. It will become standard protocol for officers at the scene to notify Helpmate to reach out to the victim instead of waiting for the victim to make the call.

A High Risk Team will be formed to include law enforcement, social workers, court officials and others who will treat **offenders with the greatest scrutiny**. This team will make sure services such as employment training and treatment are available for all offenders to reduce the risk of future acts of violence.

Commissioner Holly Jones said that "a big part of this plan is to send a clear message that **this community does not tolerate domestic violence and s**ending this message is part of a plan already implemented in Highpoint NC where they have reduced their domestic homicides from 17 to 1 over a period of 4 years."

Domestic Violence is a growing problem across the nation. It is the leading cause of injury to women—more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined and the 7th leading cause of death. In Buncombe in 2012 there were 752 domestic violence orders of arrest and in 2013 there were 5 domestic violence homicides. It has been found that 65% of domestic violence

victims had contact with the criminal justice system or a health care professional **before** they were murdered; and 58% of perpetrators had been arrested **before** they killed their partners and 22% had seen a mental health professional...***there is an opportunity to intervene and this comprehensive plan will provide the tools. The success of this initiative can make the community safer for everyone.***

- **The plan has 6 main components:**
  - **Lethality Assessments – evaluating danger to victims**
  - **High Risk Team – offender & victim interventions**
  - **Electronic Monitoring – tracking offenders for victim safety**
  - **Focused Deterrence – prevention strategies for previous offenders**
  - **Cross System Dialogue – improving communication**
  - **Public Education Campaign – increasing awareness and community engagement**

For more information: Check out **buncombecounty.org/enough** and/or contact**:**
Rebecca Knight at Rebecca.knight@buncombecounty.org or 828-301-6438.

Kathy Hughes, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board
Public Relations Director
Buncombe County Government
200 College Street Suite 300
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 250 4105

"Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."