

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Support and Resources for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Available

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today joined representatives from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) to remind Pennsylvanians that resources and assistance are available to victims and survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence during COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

“Even though we are all staying at home to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we know that staying at home is not necessarily the safest place for many victims and survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence. I want to be clear – if you need help, help is available. You are not alone,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “No one should have to face an increased risk to their safety, and help is available thanks to the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.”

PCAR is a network that provides sexual assault crisis services. Those resources can be found at www.pcar.org or at 1-888-772-7227 for a 24-hour hotline to be connected to a local sexual assault center

PCADV provides domestic violence services 24-7 via PCADV.org/find-help and the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](http://NationalDomesticViolenceHotline.org) at 1.800.799.7233 or by texting LOVEIS to 22522.

Domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers are considered life-sustaining businesses under Governor Wolf’s stay-at-home order.

“This is a stressful and scary time for many of us as we know that sexual harassment, abuse, and assault continue to occur even through a crisis like COVID-19. We want everyone to know that if you or a loved one feels that you are experiencing any sexual abuse or assault that we are here to help you,” said James Willshier, Chief Public Affairs Officer of PCAR. “We encourage anyone in need of support to contact our hotline to be connected to sexual assault center services in any county for free and confidential information from trained professionals 24 hours a day. Even though we may be practicing physical distancing, we can still help provide trauma informed care to you.”

“The circumstances of this crisis make this time especially stressful and dangerous for those who experience abuse from an intimate partner or family member. Social distancing measures will likely cause instances of violence to increase but may be under-reported,” said Julie Bancroft, Chief Public Affairs Officer of PCADV. “We want Pennsylvanians experiencing abuse to know that they are not alone and that free, safe, and confidential help is available.”

DHS has [previously](#) reminded Pennsylvanians that DHS’ ChildLine, a 24/7 hotline for reporting concerns of child abuse or neglect, is still fully operational and available at 1-800-932-0313 for Pennsylvanians seeking to report potential cases of child abuse or neglect.

Visit pa.gov for a [“Responding to COVID-19” guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).