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CONTACT: Lola Potter  
615-532-8560

**STATE CONFERENCE ON PROGRAM TO REDUCE DOMESTIC HOMICIDE**  
*86 Deaths in Tennessee in 2014 in Domestic Homicides*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – A state conference in Knoxville this month will prepare local officials to use a new tool to reduce deaths from domestic homicide in Tennessee. The training conference will help law enforcement agencies implement the Lethality Assessment Program-Maryland model (LAP), which can help local agencies in critical decisions about keeping victims safe in domestic violence cases. The April 26 conference is being held by the state's Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP).

"Gov. Haslam's Public Safety Plan launched an intense effort to end domestic violence," OCJP Director Bill Scollon said. "We've increased the number of Family Justice Centers in our state from two to seven and we plan to train over 5,000 law enforcement and domestic violence advocates in this new protocol.

"Many domestic violence-related homicides are preventable if we just recognize the signs and take action immediately."

More information about Tennessee's LAP program can be found on the state's website at <http://www.tn.gov/finance/article/fa-ocjp-lap>.

Created by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence in 2005, LAP is an innovative strategy to prevent domestic violence homicides and serious injuries by providing an easy and effective method for law enforcement and other advocates to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk. According to the Maryland group, the LAP is a "multi-pronged intervention that consists of a standardized, evidence-based lethality assessment instrument and accompanying referral protocol that helps first responders make a differentiated response that is tailored to the unique circumstances of high-danger victims."

The April conference is open to representatives from Tennessee law enforcement agencies, domestic violence service providers, shelters and other stake-holders who have been approved for training.

"LAP empowers police officers to help victims of intimate partner violence by allowing them discretion to use the 'Lethality Screen' when they sense that an assault has occurred, or that the perpetrator of a crime exhibits controlling behavior toward his/her partner," Scollon said.

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LAP consists of a set of 11 standardized questions with independent predictors to help officers predict the risk of imminent harm to a victim in a domestic dispute. When the criteria are met overall, the victim is immediately connected with a 24-hour community advocate.

The OCJP functions as a strategic planning agency that secures, distributes, and manages federal and state funds for Tennessee, including Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds and STOP Violence Against Women Program (STOP) funds. OCJP uses a structured process to look three to five years ahead of daily grant management activities at the changing needs of Tennessee's justice system and the needs of its victims of violent crime. To address crime and victimization in Tennessee, OCJP manages a systematic, year-round cycle for determining the communities' needs, identifying the justice system's problems, setting program priorities, making grant allocation decisions, managing those funded projects, and evaluating the results of those decisions.

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