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For Immediate Release

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## DA, Law Enforcement & Medical Partners Announce Strangulation Protocol & PSA

### *Incidents of Non-Fatal Strangulation More Likely to Lead to Homicide*

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office, local law enforcement officials and the San Diego City Attorney signed an agreement that outlines a coordinated community response on how to handle strangulation cases. Studies have shown that episodes of non-fatal strangulation have a greater likelihood of leading to homicide. The Strangulation Protocol puts into place a system of uniform detection, documentation and response so defendants and victims receive consistent treatment across the county.

"Strangulation is one of the most deadly and personal forms of abuse," District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis said. "It often goes unreported. By coming together with law enforcement, we hope to lower incidents of strangulation, better document occurrences of strangulation, and protect victims."

Family violence prevention professionals, prosecutors, law enforcement leaders, medical professionals, and advocates met for six months to formalize the protocol. In addition, The San Diego Police Department and the City of San Diego, in partnership with the District Attorney, created a public service announcement and training video. The 30-second public service announcement targets potential victims as well as possible suspects with information about strangulation. View the public service announcement in English, [here](#), and in Spanish, [here](#).

The training video is to teach law enforcement basic information about strangulation such as the little amount of pressure it takes to cause significant damage. For example, an adult can be rendered unconscious in 5 to 10 seconds with 11 pounds per square inch of consistent pressure.

"Strangulation is a deadly weapon used to terrorize and control victims," City Attorney Mara Elliott said. "They may be killed in an instant and are powerless to stop it. Strangulation can be hard to detect, but this protocol will assist law enforcement in documenting the signs of strangulation and bringing abusers to justice."

Since strangulation often does not leave obvious signs of injury, it is important for victims to receive appropriate medical care and it is essential for first-responders, such as police, to document the episode. The protocol includes a revised Domestic Violence Supplemental form that every patrol officer in the field completes with an additional question about non-lethal domestic violence strangulation. The protocol also includes a Countywide Strangulation Documentation Form, which will be completed in strangulation cases in order to obtain information to properly investigate the case.

“The new strangulation protocol and the subsequent training at all of the county law enforcement agencies will go a long way in reducing this often undisclosed crime,” said Escondido Police Chief Craig Carter.

It can take hours or even days to see the full effect of strangulation.

“Strangulation is an intentional act that can have deadly consequences,” said San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman. “Reporting it can save your life or the life of someone you love and help us connect suspected victims to the supportive services they need.”

In the past, strangulation was minimized because of the lack of injuries and training, but today’s protocol will begin a new chapter in reducing domestic violence and preventing a possible homicide.

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