

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Local Hospitals, City Attorney, Attorney General Partner for Domestic Violence 'Advanced Training' Conference

*Police, prosecutors, doctors, nurses, first responders, allied professionals attending*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. kicked off a two-day multi-disciplinary conference this morning as part of a statewide effort to enhance the ability to detect, document, and ultimately prevent one of the most lethal indicators of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The advanced training seminar, entitled “*Learn It. Share It. Do It. – Detecting, Investigating and Prosecuting Non-Fatal Strangulation*,” is being hosted by the [Mount Carmel College of Nursing](#) in partnership with the Columbus City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit, the Ohio Attorney General's Crime Victim Section, OhioHealth Emergency Medical Services, and the Forensic Nursing Network.

Strangulation affects all professionals working on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking cases. It is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as one of the strongest predictors for the subsequent homicide of victims of domestic violence.

The frequent lack of external injuries and the lack of medical training among domestic violence professionals have led to the minimization of this type of violence, exposing victims to potential serious health consequences, further violence, and even death.

Presenters include local and national experts, including members of the [Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention](#).

**“We are pleased to bring in some of the nation’s leading experts to help us improve our service to victims of strangulation here locally and across Ohio,”** said Anne Murray, director of the Columbus City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit. **“As a result of the advanced training I previously received on the topic, we revamped the way our office handles cases involving strangulation allegations.”**

Murray, who secured grant funding through the State Victims Assistance Act (SVAA) to bring the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention to Columbus, serves as co-coordinator of the conference along with Sandy Huntzinger of the [Ohio Attorney General's Crime Victim Section](#), [OhioHealth EMS](#) program director Holly Herron, and forensic nurses Laura Kaiser, SANE, of the [Mount Carmel Foundation](#) and Ruth Downing, SANE, CNP, of the [Forensic Nursing Network](#).

Attendees for the free event include prosecutors, law enforcement, and medical personnel including doctors, medics, and forensic nurses, as well as probation officers, victim advocates and counselors from across Ohio.

The conference is approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education, allowing attorneys who attend to receive credit for CLE instruction. EMS and nursing continuing education credit also will be granted to qualified participants.

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### **The Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention:**

#### **Gael Strack, Esq.**

Gael Strack is the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of the Alliance. Gael is a national expert on domestic violence and strangulation. Prior to this position, Gael was the founding director of the San Diego Family Justice Center, former prosecutor with the San Diego City Attorney's Office, defense attorney and deputy county counsel.

#### **Casey Gwinn, Esq.**

Casey Gwinn, Esq., is the President and Co-Founder of the Alliance. Casey is also the visionary behind the Family Justice Center Movement, first proposing the concept of the Family Justice Center model in 1989. He is a national expert on domestic violence, including prosecution, strangulation, and best practices. Prior to this position, Casey was the elected San Diego City Attorney.

#### **William Smock, M.D.**

Dr. Bill Smock is the Police Surgeon and directs the Clinical Forensic Medicine Program for the Louisville Metro Police Department. Dr. Smock is a Clinical Professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Louisville School of Medicine and Chair of the Institute on Strangulation Prevention's National Medical Advisory Committee. He is an internationally recognized forensic expert and trains nurses, physicians, law enforcement officers and attorneys in multiple fields, including officer-involved shootings, strangulation, gunshot wounds, injury mechanisms and motor vehicle trauma.

#### **Michael Agnew, Detective**

Michael was the lead Domestic Violence Detective with the Fresno PD for 15 years. He created the DV Unit at the Fresno PD and ultimately the Unit reviewed over 7,000 DV police reports each year. With 38 years of law enforcement experience with the Fresno PD he has worked in patrol, motors and as a training officer. Michael has a BS in Criminology. He helped develop several domestic violence courses for law enforcement, which he teaches as well as consistently presenting as a guest speaker for seminars as a subject matter expert on responding to domestic violence.



# STRANGULATION IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

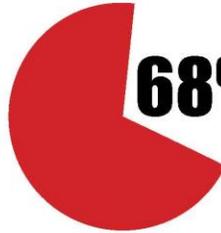
**STRANGULATION:** the obstruction of blood vessels and/or airflow in the neck resulting in asphyxia.



**1 in 4**

women will experience intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Of women at high risk, up to...

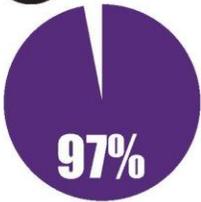


**68%**

will experience near-fatal strangulation by their partner.<sup>2</sup>



Loss of consciousness can occur within 5 - 10 seconds. Death within minutes.<sup>2</sup>



**97%**

are strangled manually (with hands).<sup>3</sup>



**38%**

report losing consciousness.<sup>4</sup>



**35%**

are strangled along with sexual assault/abuse.<sup>5</sup> **9%** are also pregnant.<sup>4</sup>



**70%**

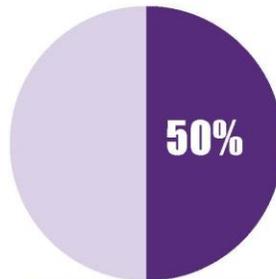
of strangled women believed they were going to die.<sup>6</sup>

And odds for homicide increase **750%**

for victims who have been previously strangled, compared to victims who have never been strangled.<sup>7</sup>

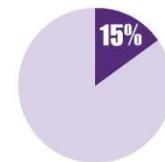
## HOWEVER...

Oftentimes, even in fatal cases, there are **NO EXTERNAL SIGNS** of injury.<sup>3</sup>



**50%**

Only half of victims have visible injuries



**15%**

Of these, only 15% could be photographed

# STRANGULATION

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS<sup>2</sup>

### NEUROLOGICAL

- Loss of memory
- Loss of consciousness
- Behavioral changes
- Loss of sensation
- Extremity weakness
- Difficulty speaking
- Fainting
- Urination
- Defecation
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Headaches

### EYES & EYELIDS

- Petechiae to eyeball
- Petechiae to eyelid
- Bloody red eyeball(s)
- Vision changes
- Droopy eyelid

### FACE

- Petechiae (tiny red spots-slightly red or florid)
- Scratch marks
- Facial drooping
- Swelling

### CHEST

- Chest pain
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruising
- Abrasions

### VOICE & THROAT CHANGES

- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Clearing the throat
- Coughing
- Nausea
- Drooling
- Sore throat
- Stridor

### SCALP

- Petechiae
- Bald spots (from hair being pulled)
- Bump to the head (from blunt force trauma or falling to the ground)

### EARS

- Ringing in ears
- Petechiae on earlobe(s)
- Bruising behind the ear
- Bleeding in the ear

### MOUTH

- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions
- Internal Petechiae

### NECK

- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruising (thumb or fingers)
- Swelling
- Ligature Marks

### BREATHING CHANGES

- Difficulty breathing
- Respiratory distress
- Unable to breathe

## CONSEQUENCES<sup>9</sup>

### PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY

PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, memory problems, nightmares, anxiety, severe stress reaction, amnesia, and psychosis.

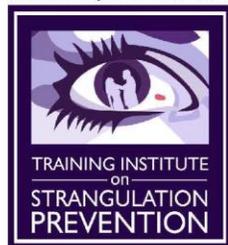
### DELAYED FATALITY

Death can occur days or weeks after the attack due to carotid artery dissection and respiratory complications such as pneumonia, ARDS and the risk of blood clots traveling to the brain (embolization).

Today,  
**38 States**  
have legislation  
**AGAINST**  
**STRANGULATION<sup>8</sup>**

**VAWA 2013**  
added strangulation  
and suffocation to  
**FEDERAL LAW**

Source: Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence: Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization—National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. MMWR 2014; 63(SS-8): 1-18.



a program of Alliance for HOPE International

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StrangulationTrainingInstitute.com

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