Dear Stakeholders,

During times of crisis, there may be an increase in domestic and sexual violence, while barriers to services are compounded. The health and safety of victims during COVID-19 is of the utmost importance to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). IDHS is dedicating $1.2 million to support access to services statewide for individuals and families impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

IDHS has created a plan to increase the capacity of its current statewide network of services and to streamline access to emergency shelter. The role of the Domestic Violence Helpline is being expanded in order to create a one stop access point for shelter needs. Victims may directly call the Helpline at 1-877-TO END DV (1-877-863-6338 voice or 1-877-863-6339 TTY) and be connected to shelter through existing local domestic violence shelters or they will be connected to emergency shelter through available hotels and motels. Transportation assistance is being offered as well.

Victims of domestic violence may also reach out to their local domestic violence program and get connected to shelter and supportive services. The IDHS network of community-based domestic violence programs will be engaged in the placement process to ensure a warm hand off for ongoing support and services.

IDHS is working with the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) to establish an emergency fund to support the IDHS-funded network of Domestic Violence Prevention & Intervention (DVPI) programs. DVPI grantees can access the emergency funds to pay for supplies, transportation, food, hotel costs, and other allowable expenses related to COVID-19.

To ensure continuity of services, IDHS is advancing funds for current FY 20 grantees for domestic violence prevention & intervention, sexual assault prevention, and partner abuse intervention programs.

Sincerely,

Grace B. Hou
Secretary, IDHS

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