

## **Executive Officer's Statement**

**October 16, 2007**

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### **Outreach, Partnership Highlight October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a national observance that allows us to show our support for domestic violence victims and their children. The month is an opportunity to be reminded how important it is to end this crime, which tears apart families and leaves victims emotionally and physically scarred. The observance is a chance to increase awareness of domestic violence and highlight programs that assist victims.

In October and year-round, the Board's Victim Compensation Program (VCP) works to help domestic violence victims. Last fiscal year, 27 percent of all claims received by the VCP were domestic violence claims. VCP benefits helped domestic violence victims pay for medical treatment, dental treatment, mental health counseling, relocation costs and other expenses that were not paid through some other form of reimbursement, such as insurance.

The VCGCB participated in the Californians United to End Domestic Violence 2nd Annual Statewide Day of Awareness event at the State Capitol. We joined domestic violence survivors, advocates, service providers, judicial and legislative officials at this event dedicated to ending violence against women and children.

The VCGCB and the Victim Compensation Committee of the California Crime Victim Assistance Association are working to develop a publication that will provide domestic violence victims with information on relocation benefits, shelter and housing resources, safety tips and security strategies.

### **VCGCB Convenes Statewide Meeting of County Victim/Witness Directors**

The VCGCB hosted a statewide meeting of county Victim/Witness Assistance Center directors on October 2. The meeting was the first of its kind for the Victim Compensation Program, and a wonderful opportunity for collaboration and dialogue with our key partners and stakeholders in the local Victim/Witness Assistance community.

We were able to highlight mutually beneficial projects, such as the "Relocation, Housing and Shelter Resources" information sheet publication mentioned earlier, and the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) video that we are distributing to county advocates. County directors viewed highlights of the new 2-hour DVD, "Victims of Violence: A Guide to Help Bring Justice" and picked up close to 1,000 DVDS to bring back to their home offices. We also gave the county directors a detailed briefing on the new CaRES claims processing system. There was additional discussion of important issues affecting the victim-assistance community. Participants thanked the VCGCB for bringing them together and requested that the event be at least an annual affair.

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### CaRES Keeps on Rolling

There's no holding back CaRES, the VCGCB's new automated victim compensation claims processing system. More counties are going live on the system during the final phase of the statewide rollout. In early October, Shasta, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties became the latest local CaRES users. They followed Orange County and Riverside County. Still to come are the counties of Alameda, Butte, El Dorado, Humboldt, Placer, San Diego, San Francisco, Sonoma and Tulare. The schedule calls for all 21 JPs to be processing claims with CaRES before Thanksgiving. The system is steadily being improved as developers add features and enhance its responsiveness, efficiency and speed. Recent improvements include automation for approval of consent agendas and an interface with the State Controller to speed payments. The new online "LiveCycle" VCP application with bar-code technology is being piloted by San Bernardino County.

### VCGCB Updates

- **September 26** - VCGCB held the quarterly meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee.
- **October 2** - The VCGCB hosted a statewide California Crime Victim Assistance Association meeting for county Victim/Witness Assistance Center directors.
- **October 2** - The VCGCB staffed a booth at the Californians United to End Domestic Violence 2nd Annual Statewide Day of Remembrance event at the State Capitol.
- **October 11-14** - The VCGCB exhibited at the 65th Annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists Conference in Long Beach.
- **October 13** - The VCGCB exhibited at the 2007 Crime Survivors Inc. 5K Run/Walk - Health & Safety Expo in Los Alamitos.
- **October 23** - Members of the VCGCB Executive Staff will attend the Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women in Long Beach. The VCGCB is also participating in the conference as an exhibitor and will staff a booth.
- **October 26** - The VCGCB will attend the dedication ceremony designating the Fresno County Probation Department Crime Victim Assistance Center facility as the James Rowland Crime Victim Assistance Center. James Rowland created the first Victim Impact Statement that provides the judiciary with an objective inventory of victim injuries and losses at sentencing.
- **November 7** - The VCGCB will exhibit and Mental Health Section representatives will speak at the Mental Health Association of San Diego's 10th Annual Behavioral Health Conference & Resource Fair in San Diego.
- **November 7** - The VCGCB will attend the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office open house celebrating the District Attorney/Victim Witness Assistance office consolidation and the 30th anniversary of the program.