



**For Immediate Release**

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**CITY OF CHICAGO'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TEXTING CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE YOUTH DURING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

The City of Chicago is partnering with the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network to launch a new campaign to educate youth about domestic violence awareness and how to seek help through the Domestic Violence Hotline. In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Domestic Violence Hotline text message campaign launched on October 1 and will respond to text messages sent to 877.863.6338.

The text messaging component was designed to specifically engage teens to reach out for help or more information on domestic violence, and follows a series of initiatives taken by the administration to break the cycle of domestic violence.

"No victim of domestic violence should ever have to suffer in silence or feel that they are alone, especially our youth," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This new campaign is designed to provide teens with additional ways to reach out for help in a format they are comfortable with so that they aren't alone and vulnerable to teen dating violence. The more opportunities we give families and victims to speak up, the closer we will be to eradicating domestic violence so that our families and communities can thrive."

To highlight the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the City of Chicago is canvassing buses, trains, and billboards with the Domestic Violence Hotline telephone number and a new youth-focused public information campaign. Since the Domestic Violence Hotline launched in 1998, more than 440,000 calls have been answered.

"We are excited to partner with the city on the upcoming advertising campaign for October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month," said Kathleen A. Doherty, Executive Director of Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network. "Our Hotline number will reach thousands in the community who are affected by domestic violence."

The Domestic Violence Hotline is a 24/7, toll-free, confidential hotline. Bilingual Spanish/English speaking staff is available to take calls, and they can use a Language Line to get immediate interpretation for more than 170 other languages.

"Everyone should feel they have the support they need to address domestic violence, especially our youth who are dealing with the serious issue of teen dating violence," said Department of Family

and Support Services Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. “Providing text message as an option allows teens to reach out for help in a format they are comfortable with. “

Under Mayor Emanuel’s leadership, the City of Chicago has coordinated a number of comprehensive citywide domestic violence prevention initiatives, and opened the city’s first domestic violence shelter in more than a decade. The administration has convened several law enforcement agencies, local government offices, prosecutors, and community service groups to align forces to break the cycle of domestic violence. To date, almost 2,000 police officers across the city have completed an advanced training led by a citywide domestic violence prevention task force, including the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network, on domestic violence related topics, from policy, law and procedure to community resources and the psychosocial impactors of domestic violence. Next month, an additional 40 Department members will attend an intensive 40 hour law enforcement domestic violence training to better enhance the response to victims. The citywide trainings are an effort to improve support to victims in response to reports of domestic violence and to increase prosecution rates for these crimes.

In addition, the City has expanded a pilot an inter-agency response protocol pilot to three police districts: the 3rd District, 4th District and the 14th District. To prevent abuse, the pilot requires officers responding to domestic violence calls to complete a risk assessment that determines further risk of domestic violence injury and to give referrals and connection with violence advocates when appropriate.

All twenty-two police districts will be hosting domestic violence education and awareness activities for the community this month. More information on the many activities is available at local police districts.

For more information and support, anyone can call or text the Domestic Violence Hotline at 877.863.6338. To report domestic abuse, Chicagoans should call 9-1-1.

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