

Partnership Agreement
BETWEEN
Law Enforcement Partners
AND

Palm Beach County Victim's Services and Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS)
OVC Grant FY 2016 Vision 21: Multidisciplinary Response to Families and Communities in Complex Homicide Cases Grant Program

1. Overview:

Palm Beach County Victim's Services and Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS), through a three year grant funded program, collaborated with local law enforcement partners to develop and implement a county-wide best practice which sought to address impaired driving related deaths. Impaired driving crashes are often initially treated as accidents instead of crimes, which hinders the appropriate delivery of victim services, or in some cases, may lead to the absence of services altogether. Moreover, the lengthy process of completing toxicology reports and related medical examiner's investigative reports, both of which are required to determine prosecutorial options, often leave families waiting for up to six months to know whether or not the impaired driver will be charged for the death of their family member(s). This critical period of waiting, often without services or interventions, can be particularly difficult and in many ways contributes to prolonged grieving and emotional trauma. The family members are left alone in their grief, unable to be linked to resources like victim's compensation, burial assistance, evidence-based therapy, personal and legal advocacy and emergency financial assistance that are readily available in their community.

A task force, the Impaired Driving Death Enhanced Assistance (I.D.E.A) Task Force, comprised of law enforcement traffic homicide units, state attorney's office, mental health providers, MADD and other partners was established to develop protocols and best practices, identify training needs, create resource guides for next of kin and expanded the model to DUI cases of Serious Bodily Injury. Law Enforcement members of the task force include Traffic Homicide Investigators from Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO), Boca Raton Police Department, Boynton Beach Police Department, Delray Beach Police Department, Jupiter Police Department, Palm Beach Gardens Police Department, North Palm Beach Police Department, West Palm Beach Police Department, and the Florida Highway Patrol.

The I.D.E.A Task Force developed and implemented effective protocols utilizing a coordinated, multidisciplinary and victim-centered immediate response to address the unmet and complex needs of this crime type. Prior to the funding of this position, there were no protocols, training or timely referrals regarding DUI death cases. Often, families would not receive services for at least six months after the death of their loved one. Since implementation of the new protocol, the first contact with family has been reduced to an average 24 hours to 7 days.

2. Purpose:

To establish a Partnership Agreement between law enforcement agencies with traffic homicide units located within Palm Beach County and PBCVS. This document defines procedures for the coordination of victim advocacy services, support, counseling and referral services for victims and next of kin impacted by impaired driving related deaths and serious bodily injury crashes.

3. Scope:

This Partnership Agreement does not create additional jurisdiction or limit or modify existing jurisdiction vested in the parties. This Partnership Agreement provides guidance and documents as an agreement for general support between law enforcement agencies within Palm Beach County and PBCVS.

4. Responsibilities:

a. When responding to serious bodily injury or fatal crashes involving suspected or confirmed impairment, law enforcement agencies within Palm Beach County shall:

(1) Follow established agency response procedures:

- a. Initial assessment
- b. Scene safety
- c. Treat and transport according to local agency medical protocols
- d. Evidence preservation
- e. Maintain scene security and evidence preservation until turned over to the traffic homicide investigator
- f. Scene documentation
- g. Emotional support- facilitate until victim advocate arrives

(2) Request an **immediate response** of a victim advocate should the case meet the following criteria:

- a. Suspected or confirmed DUI crash resulting in death
- b. Suspected or confirmed DUI crash resulting in serious bodily injury with likelihood of death
- c. Family is arriving on scene of a suspected or confirmed DUI crash resulting in death or serious bodily injury with the likelihood of death
- d. Death Notification- this should be completed alongside the victim advocate
- e. Incident deemed necessary by the sergeant and PBCVS duty supervisor

(3) Law Enforcement will call the Violent Crime Helpline 561-833-7273 daytime or after-hours, request an immediate response of a victim advocate, and provide the following information:

- a. Summary of the crash, including location
- b. Victim's condition, extent of injuries, and location
- c. Victim's name and date of birth

- d. Next of kin's name and contact information
- e. Investigator's name, agency, and phone number
- f. Location victim advocate should respond

(4) Request a **delayed response** of a victim advocate should the case meet the following criteria:

- a. Delayed fatality
- b. Crime not yet determined
- c. Hit and run with serious bodily injury or fatality
- d. Next of kin is located outside of Palm Beach County

(5) Within 24 hours of the crash, law enforcement will call the Violent Crime Helpline 561-833-7273 to have a victim advocate assigned.

b. When responding to a serious bodily injury crash or fatal crash involving suspected or confirmed impairment, PBCVS shall:

(1) Follow established agency response procedures

(2) When the victim advocate is called out, the advocate must arrive at the requested location within one hour of the call.

(3) During the response, the victim advocate will:

- a. Greet the next of kin and briefly provide information about PBCVS
- b. If located at a hospital, assist in finding a comfortable waiting area for the next of kin
- c. If located at a home for a death notification, enter the home with law enforcement if the homeowner permits and have the next of kin be seated
- d. Be present alongside law enforcement, while law enforcement delivers the death notification
- e. Provide crisis intervention
- f. Inquire if there are any immediate needs and assist
- g. Normalize the feelings of the next of kin
- h. Inquire about a friend or family member that you can call to come to the location to provide additional support
- i. Educate the next of kin about what may be experienced emotionally and/or physically
- j. Complete the Survivor Resource Packet and Client Intake Sheet with the next of kin
- k. When leaving the next of kin, advise him/her that an advocate will follow up the next business day

(4) The victim advocate shall conduct follow up contact to include:

- a. The next business day, the victim advocate will follow up with the next of kin and review the Survivor Resource Packet
- b. Educate and inform the next of kin on what to expect over the next week.
- c. Assist with Office of the Attorney General Crime Victims' Compensation application
- d. Assist with locating a funeral home and provide assistance for funeral expenses
- e. Provide assistance negotiating the complex web of social service and criminal justice systems

c. All parties to this Agreement agree that it shall maintain the confidential and exempt status of the information provided to it, and created by it, in its performance of this Agreement and further understands that such information shall be used only for its contemplated purposes and shall not be used for any other purpose. Any and all records created by a law enforcement partner agency or the PBCVS shall be maintained in accordance with applicable State of Florida records retention guidelines and public records laws. A law enforcement partner agency or the PBCVS that receives a public records request relating to the incidents or the victim services covered under this Agreement shall bear the responsibility of responding to said public records requests for those records that are within its possession, in accordance with Chapter 119, Florida State Statutes.

5. Fees For Services: PBCVS charges no fees for services provided to crime victims.

7. Administration and Execution:

a. This Partnership Agreement shall remain in full force and effect until specifically abrogated by one of the parties to this agreement.

b. This Partnership Agreement will become effective upon the date of the last party to sign.

c. In witness thereof, the undersigned parties execute this Partnership Agreement.

Signature Page

We, the undersigned have read and agree with this Partnership Agreement.

By _____

Nicole Bishop, Director,
Victim Services & Certified
Rape Crisis Center

Date _____

Police Department

By _____

Chief of Police

Date _____