

Area Law Enforcement, in cooperation with the New Directions Center, Inc., and the Virginia Attorney General's office, will be implementing a new initiative aimed at identifying victims of domestic violence who are at high risk of homicide or serious bodily harm. On October 16th, Deputies with the Augusta County Sheriff's Office along with Waynesboro and Staunton Police officers will begin using the Lethality Assessment Program to help determine if a domestic violence victim meets criteria that would suggest their personal safety is at high risk. The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), which was developed by the Maryland Network to End Domestic Violence in 2005, is an evidence based program that provides an easy and effective method for law enforcement or other professionals to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk for homicide or serious bodily harm perpetrated by their intimate partners. Once identified on scene or upon an officer's first contact, these high risk victims would be immediately connected with New Directions to provide the fastest possible access for delivery of case specific services. Officers of all three departments recently completed training on the new initiative and are ready begin using this new tool in an effort to better protect our respective citizens.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and your law enforcement agencies are honored to partner with New Directions and The Attorney General's Office to do all we can to protect the victims of this serious, and all too common, crime.