



News Release

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Judiciary Releases Video on Domestic Violence Program

The New Jersey Judiciary has released a new [video](#) about a program that allows domestic violence victims to apply for a temporary restraining order (TRO) directly from a hospital or safe house using a video link to talk to a family court judge. The October release date coincides with national Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The 10-minute video provides a detailed look at the Hospital to Court Safety Assistance Project and the Safe House to Court Safety Assistance Project. It includes interviews with a judge, a hospital staff member and a safe house staff member, as well as a dramatization of how the system allows the victim to speak with the judge through the video system.

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner said, “This video highlights a successful partnership that has enabled victims of domestic violence to seek protection from the courts while they get treatment and support from hospitals and safe houses. By working together, we have made important strides to address the serious problem that domestic violence presents in our society today.”

The video highlights many of the programs’ benefits, such as better protecting victims by enabling them to receive a TRO before leaving the hospital or safe house. Because domestic violence victims are less likely or less willing to travel to the courthouse on their own to seek a TRO, the program increases the chances that a victim will follow through in obtaining a TRO against the perpetrator. Victims also can receive treatment, protection and support from hospital or shelter staff during the process.

“This partnership with hospitals and safe houses allows victims of domestic violence to be able to obtain a TRO as quickly and as safely as possible,” said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. “Victims oftentimes do not have the time, the transportation, the childcare, or even the psychological strength or emotional empowerment to get themselves down to the courthouse to follow through on gaining a TRO. A victim can work with law enforcement to secure much needed protection after the issuance of a TRO. By eliminating the obstacles for victims to present their case to a judge, we greatly increase the odds that the victim will obtain that important protection.”

Judges have praised the program, highlighting the value of being able to see and communicate directly with the victim by video. Just as in an in-court hearing, interpreting services are provided by the court when needed. Hospital and safe house staff have found that the program enables them to support victims during what can be an emotional court process.

If granted, the TRO can be faxed directly to the victim at the hospital or safe house. After the hearing, the judge or court staff member provides the victim with additional information about the court process and other available resources. A date is set for the victim to appear in court to obtain a final restraining order.

The video link program began in Passaic Vicinage in partnership with St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson and has expanded to include hospitals in Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, and Union counties and safe houses in Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean and Passaic counties. The program is funded through the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which is administered by the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice within the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety.

New Jersey's Prevention of Domestic Violence Act permits all victims of domestic violence to obtain a restraining order to protect them from further harm if someone is hurting them. An abuser can be a spouse, former spouse or the co-parent of a child. Victims are protected if they are living with or have lived with the abuser or if they are dating or have dated the abuser.

The video can be accessed using the YouTube video link on the Judiciary website.

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