**Stalking News Release/Letter to the Editor**

For Immediate Release Contact: [Name/Title/Agency]
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January Is National Stalking Awareness Month

[Name of Organization] Launches Community Stalking Awareness Campaign

CITY/STATE— January 2020 marks the sixeenth National Stalking Awareness Month, an annual call to action to recognize and respond to the serious crime of stalking. It is critical to raise the issue of stalking as its own form of violence as well as a crime that frequently predicts and co-occurs with physical and sexual assault. Stalking impacts over 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men in the United States1 -- yet, despite the prevalence and impacts, many victims and criminal justice professionals underestimate its danger and urgency.

Stalking is defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear. Many stalking victims experience being followed, approached, monitored and/or threatened – including through various forms of technology2. Victims and survivors often suffer anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression as a result of their victimization, and many lose time from work and/or move3,4. Stalking is a terrifying and psychologically harmful crime in its own right as well as a predictor of potentially lethal violence: in 85% of cases where an intimate partner (i.e., boyfriend or husband) attempted to murder his female partner, stalking occurred the year prior to the attack5.

Stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia – as well as tribal lands and in the military justice system -- but can be difficult to recognize and prosecute in a system designed to respond to singular incidents rather than the series of acts that constitutes stalking.

NSAM’s theme —“Stalking: Know It. Name It. Stop It.” – is a call to action for everyone in [name of community] and across the country. While police and victim-serving professionals are critical, the reality is that the vast majority of victims tell friends or family about the stalking first.

“We all have a role to play in identifying stalking, intervening when necessary and supporting victims and survivors,” said [name and title of local spokesperson (with permission)]. [Your organization’s name] will offer [describe outreach activity] to promote awareness and public education about stalking during the annual observance. For more information, please contact [your name and contact information].

For additional resources to help promote National Stalking Awareness Month, please visit http://stalkingawareness.org and www.ovw.usdoj.gov. ### [Add your organization’s mission statement here.]

Sources:

1. Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M., Chen, J. (2018). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
2. Matthew J. Breiding et al., “Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization - National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 63, No. 8 (2014)
3. Eric Blauuw et al., “The Toll of Stalking,” Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, no. 1 (2002):50-63.
4. Katrina Baum et al., “Stalking Victimization in the United States.” (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).
5. McFarlane et al., *Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide*, 3(4) Homicide Studies 300-16 (1999).