

## **Executive Officer's Statement**

**August 23, 2007**

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### **NOVA Recognizes Board Member Michael Ramos**

At its recent national conference, the National Organization for Victim Assistance presented Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board Member Michael Ramos with the Morton Bard Allied Professional Award, in recognition of his service to victims of crime.

Board Member Ramos, District Attorney for San Bernardino County, was presented the award for his tireless work on behalf of victims' rights, including his work representing the interests of victims at offender parole hearings. The award recognizes those who may not work in victim service directly, but who are *allies* in the victim-assistance field.

### **NOVA Conference Inspires Attendees and Reinforces VCGCB Mission**

Along with other VCGCB staff who attended the recent North American Victim Assistance Conference, I returned with a renewed awareness of the challenges faced by victims of violent crime. The conference underscored how California's Victim Compensation Program (VCP), or any single victim service provider, is just one part of a diverse victim-assistance picture.

The 33rd Annual National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) conference was inspirational. The educational workshops on a variety of traditional and emerging victims' issues were valuable. What really hit home was a special tribute to five victims of violent crime. Each victim had a heart-rending story to tell, a story of how they found the courage to battle back from the depths of despair to dedicate their lives to helping other victims. Their stories inspire us to do everything we can to efficiently, responsively and compassionately deliver compensation service to our customers.

NOVA is composed of victim and Victim/Witness assistance programs and professionals, criminal justice agencies, mental health professionals, researchers, former victims and survivors, and others committed to increasing recognition and implementation of victim rights and services. This partnership of organizations, government agencies, advocates and professionals mirrors the victim-assistance community in California. Seeing such a coalition in action highlights the importance of the Victim Compensation Program working closely with its victim-assistance partners.

### **Congress Considers VOCA Funding Cap**

The VCGCB continues to monitor the federal budget process in regard to funding for the Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). In July the House by a vote of 395-34 adopted the Poe/Costa/Moore amendment to the Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) appropriations bill (H.R. 3093), which could increase the VOCA cap from \$625 million to \$635 million. The Senate will take up its version of the CJS appropriations bill (S. 1745) which currently keeps the VOCA cap at \$625 million. Federal VOCA funds provide essential support for state victim compensation programs nationwide. We will continue to follow the VOCA funding in Congress.

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### CaRES Rolls Out to Three More Counties

Late July and August have been busy for VCGCB as we roll out CaRES (Compensation and Restitution System) to three of our largest local partner agencies, the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties. This is a significant milestone for CaRES. It is moving from the pilot phase of the rollout – where it has been developed with the assistance of our San Bernardino, San Joaquin, and Sacramento County partners – to full-scale deployment. The rollout has truly been a team effort, with the work of VCGCB program, training and technical staff supported by the Department of Technology Services and contributions from partner agencies like the State Controller. The rollout will continue this fall to the rest of the 20 counties that jointly administer the VCP statewide as the program transitions fully to CaRES.

### VCGCB Managers Graduate from Leadership for the Government Executive Program

As part of its commitment to the highest standards of public service, the VCGCB encourages its managers to learn and grow as professionals. I would like to congratulate three of our managers, Terri Hamilton, Human Resources and Business Services, Sara Murillo, Fiscal Services, and Afzal Rashid, Mental Health Section, on their recent graduation from the Government Executive Program at Sacramento State College of Continuing Education. These managers have learned and honed skills that will help them lead VCGCB to higher levels of customer service and program efficiency.

### VCGCB Updates

- **Terri Hamilton** has accepted appointment as Deputy Executive Officer for the Fiscal Services Division. Hamilton has worked for the Board for the past three years, with duties that included oversight of Business Services, Customer Service, Human Resources and Labor Relations.
- **Frances Chacon**, Deputy Executive Officer for Legislation and Public Affairs, has accepted a position with Charles Schwab.
- **Spanish Language Phone Directory Information:** VCGCB will have a two-page information advertisement in the yellow pages of the Spanish language directory, "Seccion Amarilla" in six regions including, Fresno, Sacramento, San Jose, Stockton/Modesto, Los Angeles, and San Francisco/Oakland.
- **New Law Enforcement Job-Aid Card:** The VCGCB recently published this new-business card-size handout item. The user-friendly card is a convenient option for law enforcement and other first responders to use when advising crime victims of their rights and available resources.

### Recent and Upcoming Events and Meetings

- **July 30** - VCGCB participated in a meeting convened by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) in San Diego to review guidelines on hate crimes.
- **July 31** - VCGCB hosted the bi-monthly Victim Compensation Committee meeting of the California Crime Victim Assistance Association to discuss issues affecting victim assistance.
- **August 27-31** - VCGCB will exhibit at the Asian Gang Investigators' Association of California 2007 International Terrorism and Organized Crime Conference in Anaheim.
- **September 17-19** - VCGCB will attend the UC Davis Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in Sacramento.
- **September 17-19** - VCGCB will attend the 12th International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma in San Diego.
- **September 17-19** - VCGCB will attend the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards national meeting in Williamsburg, VA.
- **October 2** - VCGCB hosts the statewide California Crime Victim Assistance Association meeting.