

Executive Officer's Statement

September 25, 2007

Today Marks First Formal National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims

Today, September 25, 2007, marks the first formal observance of the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. Leading the official ceremonies in Washington, D.C., are the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime, the National Center for Victims of Crime, and the National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children. The observance began informally nearly 30 years ago as a memorial to a single victim, founded in 1978 by Robert and Charlotte Hullinger after their 19-year-old daughter, Lisa, was murdered. The anniversary of Lisa's death is observed as the Day of Remembrance to honor all victims of homicide and their survivors. Nationally, there are more than 16,000 murders annually. In 2006, there were 2,483 homicide victims in California.

It is difficult to imagine the grief of losing a loved one in such a terrible, senseless way. Remembering victims on this day shows our support for the family members and loved ones who struggle to recover from their loss. This day of remembrance also underscores the importance of providing services to victims, services like the Board's Victim Compensation Program. The program helps survivors of homicide, and other victims, recover from the physical, emotional and financial trauma of violent crime. Program staff reach out to help family members pay for funerals. Compensation payments offset the loss of financial support from the victim. Our program supports mental health services that help survivors cope with their loss. To mark the Day of Remembrance and honor victims, their loved ones and victim service providers, we thought it would be fitting to observe a brief moment of silence.

Board Reaches Out to Victims on 9/11 Anniversary

On the sixth anniversary of the September 11th attacks, the nation paused to remember the nearly 3000 people who lost their lives, those who survived the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, and the many family members and loved ones affected by the tragedy. The 9/11 terror attacks directly impacted more than 300 survivors and family members of victims from California. To recognize survivors and family members on the occasion of the 9/11 anniversary, and commend them for their continued courage, VCGCB reached out with a personal letter on behalf of the Board. The letter was signed by Board Chair Rosario Marín and distributed to the many survivors and family members assisted by the Victim Compensation Program.

As we honored our 9/11 victims and survivors, we also remembered the Board's response to the needs of these victims of violent crime. The 9/11 jetliners were winging their way to California and there were many Californians who lost loved ones in the World Trade Center. Survivors and family members were left with financial burdens, such as paying for funerals. They needed assistance dealing with emotional burdens as well. In the months following the attacks, the Board paid individual claims and coordinated group counseling and support sessions through a special federal grant. We stand ready to offer similar assistance should a terrorist attack or other mass-casualty crime impact Californians.

(Continued on page 2)

VCGCB Passes Federal VOCA Review With Flying Colors

The California Victim Compensation Program receives significant funding through grants under the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). To qualify for this critical federal funding, the California Victim Compensation Program (VCP) must periodically undergo an audit from the federal Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. The most recent audit, the first since 2000, featured a site visit earlier this year from a federal program specialist who reviewed the VCP's administration and implementation of victim compensation to ensure it meets federal requirements. We are pleased to report that the VCP has successfully passed the audit and been judged to be doing an exceptional job at implementing the federal grant program. The importance of VOCA funding is evident when you consider the VOCA grant of \$32.1 million awarded to VCGCB this year is revenue that offsets annual compensation payments, which totaled nearly \$75 million for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

Program Launches Final Phase of CaRES Claims Processing System Rollout

The VCGCB's new automated victim compensation claims processing system, CaRES (Compensation and Restitution System), is now operating at three of our largest local partner agencies, the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties. They join pilot counties San Bernardino, San Joaquin, and Sacramento County using the new system. We are currently starting the final phase of the rollout of CaRES to the remaining 15 counties that jointly administer the VCP statewide. Training begins this month here in our headquarters training facility for the first of the remaining partner agencies, and the statewide rollout is scheduled to be completed this fall. Meanwhile, developers continue to enhance CaRES with performance upgrades, new tools for users, and added capabilities, including an electronic interface with the State Controller to speed processing of payments. The new online "LiveCycle" VCP application with bar-code technology is being piloted by San Bernardino County.

VCGCB Updates

- **Gary Longholm** is the Board's new Deputy Executive Officer for Legislation and Public Affairs. Longholm served as the Legislation Representative at the Department of General Services since 1995, but he has extensive past experience here at VCGCB. Gary began his state career at the Board in 1974 and over the following decade served in various positions including Assistant Executive Officer and Executive Officer at the Board of Control.

Recent and Upcoming Events and Meetings

- **September 17-19** - VCGCB attended the UC Davis Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in Sacramento.
- **September 17-19** - VCGCB attended the 12th International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma in San Diego.
- **September 17-19** - VCGCB attended the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards national meeting in Williamsburg, VA.
- **September 26** - VCGCB holds the quarterly meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee.
- **October 2** - VCGCB hosts a California Crime Victim Assistance Association (CCVAA) meeting for county Victim/Witness Assistance Center directors.