

As you read this, 2020 is fast coming to an end and New Year celebrations are right around the corner. Good riddance. For many, 2020 was Annus Horribilis. For all in the victim services provider community it has been a long, difficult challenge. The social distancing from victims in every community, the disruptions to shelters and other vital agencies, the isolation of victims of crime themselves - never have we all been faced with problems like these.

But at the same time, the victim service provider community has been inspiring. We've seen victim advocates and other providers invent creative work-

in Washington. We're doing our part here too. Attorney General Alan Wilson has joined with all other State Attorneys General in calling for the restoration of funding to the federal Victims of Crime Trust Fund which supports not only the VOCA program, but also the Violence Against Women Act program and state Victim Compensation programs.

However our funding picture looks for programs starting in October 2021, we pledge to work in partnership with you on how to best deliver services to victims of crime. I and all my staff welcome your input. You can always reach me at Bfitzpatrick@scag.gov or at 803-917-1439.

So, on behalf of everyone with the Crime Victim Services Division in the Office of the Attorney General, I wish you all a healthy and happy New Year. We miss seeing you in person. Zoom just doesn't cut it.

Having a Bad Day?

Yup. Yes, today has not been the best. Woke up cranky, car broke down, heater's acting up. My shoulder aches from typing all day in a chair that's not working for me. My home hair-dye job is a greenish shade of blonde and my best friend just moved to Florida. I've been better. Oh, I almost forgot: we're

[https://
www.glaucoma.org/
news/glaucoma-
awareness-month.php](https://www.glaucoma.org/news/glaucoma-awareness-month.php)

January is **National Glaucoma Awareness Month**, an important time to spread the word about this sight-stealing disease.

Currently, more than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma. The National Eye Institute projects this number will reach 4.2 million by 2030, a 58 percent increase.

Glaucoma is called "the sneak thief of sight" since there are no symptoms and once vision is lost, it's permanent. As much as 40% of ion isds

Last month, Department of Crime Victim Assistance Grants staff conducted its annual Implementation Workshop, which covered all aspects of the newly awarded 2020 grants. Approximately 150 subgrantees participated. For the first time, this workshop was held entirely virtually, with both a live streaming option as well as a recorded version on the AGO Grants website for those who were unable to attend. Due to COVID, in person contact is limited, but staff is working constantly via phone or internet to provide technical assistance to agencies.

During the upcoming year, the DCVAG will fund 140 unique projects across the state for a total awarded amount of \$35,296,837. These grants include projects at state agencies, law enforcement agencies, solicitor's offices, domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, child advocacy centers, child residential homes, and other victim service agencies that work to serve victims of violent crime. Combined, these projects will work to employ approximately 645 full-time and 127 part-time victim advocates that will support victims in their communities.

While the 2020 VOCA, VAWA, and SVAP grants began on October 1, staff is also focusing on preparations for the 2021 funding cycle. Under current plans, an announcement regarding availability of funds will be made in January with a virtual solicitation workshop scheduled for February 10. After this workshop, the 2021 application period will begin.

How does the Federal *Victims of Crime Act*, also known as "VOCA

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/stories/heartdefects.html>

Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week is observed each year during to promote awareness and education about congenital heart defects (CHDs). CHDs affect approximately one in 100 births every year in the United States and are the most common type of birth defect (1,2).

Heart defects are conditions that persons live with throughout their lives; an estimated 1 million children and 1.4 million adults in the United States were living with a CHD in 2010 (3). CDC's website, Stories: Living with Heart Defects, includes personal stories by persons affected by CHDs.

CDC works to track and research CHDs through many different efforts, including 1) working with state tracking programs to evaluate newborn screening for critical congenital heart defects;* 2) funding state programs to track birth defects,† including CHDs; 3) funding several research centers^s across the nation to help understand the causes of birth defects, including CHDs; and 4) launching projects focused on tracking persons with CHDs across the lifespan.

Although we are continuing to telework, DCVC is still working hard to educate and train victim service providers across the State of South Carolina regarding our crime victim compensation program, services and benefits.

During the 1st Quarter for this fiscal year (FY 20-21), please note the following:

[DCVC Training and Publication Items Distributed:](#)

Training Events Conducted: 6

Participants Trained: 367

Publications Distributed: 61

(We are teleworking and referring more advocates and service providers to our website for publication items due to COVID-19)

When comparing the above information for this fiscal year to DCVC stats from this time last fiscal year FY19-20, please note the following:

Training Events Conducted: 7

(One more training was conducted)

Participants Trained: 147

(220 less participants trained for this fiscal year)

Publications Distributed: 745

(685 more publication items distributed this fiscal year. We were not teleworking and was in the office daily and actually mailing out publication items to advocates and service providers)

[DCVC Law Enforcement and Advocate Training Initiative](#)

In an effort to continue our training with law enforcement and advocates statewide, DCVC has

[https://
www.healthline.com/
health/multiple-
sclerosis
https://](https://www.healthline.com/health/multiple-sclerosis)

[www.nationalmssocie
ty.org/Get-Involved/
Raise-Awareness](https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Get-Involved/Raise-Awareness)

Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month

Every day, people living with MS do whatever it takes to move their lives forward despite the challenges. Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic illness involving your central nervous system (CNS). The immune system attacks myelin, which is the protective layer around nerve fibers. This causes inflammation and scar tissue, or lesions. This can make it hard for your brain to send signals to the rest of your body.

Helping others better understand this complex and unpredictable disease is critical to fueling the progress that changes lives for people affected by MS and ultimately will end the disease forever.

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We then briefly discuss what tragedy took place and how it has devastated you and/or your family. Please contact me if you or a support group member

(New Resource to Explore a Different Perspective:)

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims has released the "Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Survivors: A Toolkit for Enhancing Critical Knowledge and Informing Action within the Crime Victim Assistance Field" which, beyond the Toolkit, includes a wonderful webinar recording and many online resources, all of which are available at <https://reachingvictims.org/resource/increasing-access-toolkit/>

[National Kidney Awareness Month](#)

<https://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-kidney-month-march/>

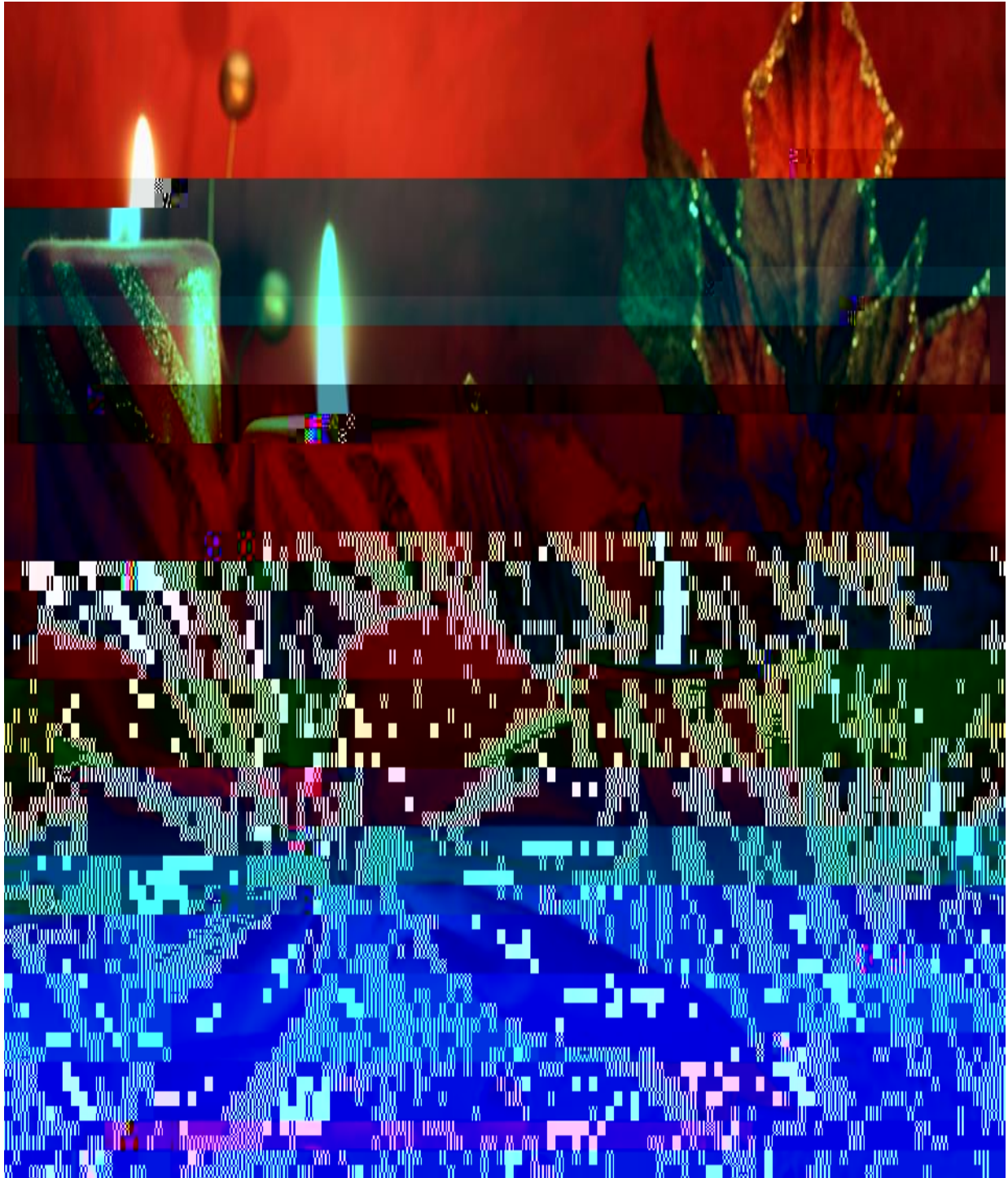
March is National Kidney Month, a time when communities across the country raise awareness about kidney disease. During the month of March we are reminded to give our kidneys a check up. 1 in 3 Americans are at high risk for kidney disease because of diabetes, high blood pressure, or family history of kidney failure. On top of that, 30 million Americans already have kidney disease, and many of them are not aware of it because symptoms usually don't show until the disease has progressed.

Our kidneys are crucial for 3 main reasons. They regulate water, they remove waste and regulate minerals, and they produce hormones. Located in our lower back, these two hard-working organs also filter 200 liters of blood a day! Keeping our kidneys healthy is vital to a long and productive life.

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Merry Christmas and Happy New !



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