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83-2017
For Immediate Release
October 26, 2017

**BRONX DISTRICT ATTORNEY DARCEL D. CLARK AND NYPD ANNOUNCE
JOINT INITIATIVE TO COMBAT STRANGULATION CASES
First-in-City Homicide Prevention Partnership
Coincides With Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced a new initiative between her Office and the New York City Police Department's Detective Bureau which will track cases of strangulation even without an arrest being made, in an effort to prevent future violence and create early engagement with victims.

District Attorney Clark said, "Strangulation and Criminal Obstruction of Breathing or Blood Circulation are serious crimes. In addition to the brutal injuries they inflict, they are strong indicators of a history of domestic violence as well as escalating aggression, which can result in death.

"As Domestic Violence Awareness Month comes to an end we are reminded of the work that still must be done to not only prosecute these crimes but to be proactive in seeing warning signs that can reduce domestic violence related homicides. This new approach will allow us to build stronger cases and communicate with victims right away.

"I'm thankful to NYPD Assistant Chief Jason Wilcox, Commanding Officer of Bronx Detectives, for working with us to deal with these significant issues in a more timely manner; and the New York City Family Justice Center, for its continuing support."

NYPD Commissioner James P. O'Neill said, "Domestic violence has traditionally been a highly under-reported crime. Programs like this establish a proactive approach to assisting and supporting victims of domestic violence, as well as preventing its re-occurrence. I commend the office of District Attorney Darcel Clark for taking this initiative."

The combined initiative allows officers to refer strangulation cases to the Bronx District Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Bureau. Upon referral, Domestic Violence Bureau



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prosecutors and Bronx Detectives will work with victims at the earliest stage to educate them on the seriousness of strangulation, which studies have shown can lead to homicide cases.

The initiative is being led by Amy Litwin, Chief of the Domestic Violence Bureau, and Assistant Chief Wilcox. Assistant District Attorney Agatha DiGiovanni, Supervisor of the Domestic Violence Complaint Unit, will be coordinating incoming cases. The Bronx District Attorney's Office will also refer victims to its Crime Victims Assistance Unit and the Family Justice Center, operated by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence.

District Attorney Clark said that data shows that a victim of domestic violence who has been strangled is seven times more likely to be the victim of a homicide at the hands of his/her abuser. Other effects of strangulation include burst blood vessels on the skin and eyes, vision and speech impairment, thyroid issues, memory loss, respiratory complications and brain damage.

Approximately 28 percent of the domestic violence cases currently being prosecuted in the Bronx include a charge of Criminal Obstruction of Breathing or Felony Strangulation. The immediate collection of evidence through this new partnership will enable the prosecution of abusers if they commit future acts of violence or if the victim later decides to not go forward against his/her abuser.

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