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**WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES IN NYC ON THE RISE, ACS ANNOUNCES
FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROGRAM FOCUSED ON SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE AS WELL AS THE PERSON CAUSING HARM**

*For the First Time Ever, "A Safe Way Forward" Will Focus on Prevention and Clinical
Intervention for Survivors, Children and Persons Causing Harm*

New York, NY – Today, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced a new program that will, for the first time ever, provide prevention services to survivors of domestic violence as well as those causing harm. The announcement comes just days after a new report revealed that domestic violence cases reported to police in New York City have increased four percent.

"This new program is the first of its kind in the country, as it will provide both prevention and clinical services to all members of families experiencing domestic violence, including the survivors, children and the person causing harm," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "When a family experiences domestic violence, this not only has devastating impacts on the immediate well-being and functioning of the children and survivors, the effects can be found in the generations that follow. This innovative new approach can help create positive outcomes for children and interrupt the cyclical patterns of abuse and trauma."

In 2016, the NYPD responded to over 91,600 intimate partner related domestic violence reports. According to the NYPD, as of this year, there were already 216,000 domestic violence investigations. Research indicates that in 30-60 percent of cases, maltreatment of children occurs in homes where there is also domestic violence. Moreover, exposure to domestic violence has a profound negative impact on children's social and emotional development.

The new prevention model, titled "A Safe Way Forward," is an innovative service developed by the ACS Community Based Strategies team in collaboration with national experts, advocates, survivors and persons causing harm. It was informed by 12 months of exhaustive research including interviews with over 100 national experts and close collaboration with the Mayor's office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

The model aims to safely provide services to the whole family- providing prevention and clinical services to the survivor and children as well as separate and simultaneous

services to the person causing harm. Experts at ACS say that, when safe to do so, involving the person causing harm in these services can provide the individual with the opportunity to learn more about their triggers and how their behavior is impacting the family. The goal is to promote behavior change and interrupt the intergenerational impact of domestic violence on families.

ACS plans to launch the program this spring, with Children's Aid Society in the Bronx and Safe Horizon on Staten Island. At the onset, the programs will serve 130 families in the Bronx and Staten Island that are involved in court-ordered supervision and have been referred to prevention services.

"The collaborative approach to designing these services made sure that the voices of families and children were heard throughout the process – so I am confident these services will meet their needs. We want every part of this program to be empowering to those whose lives are touched by domestic violence – including designing the program and hiring the staff," said **ACS Deputy Commissioner for Prevention Dr. Jacqueline Martin**.

"I applaud Commissioner Hansell and the Administration for Children's Services for creating a program that will include critical services for survivors of intimate partner violence and their children, as well as people causing harm," said **Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence**. "This innovative model is a bold step and recognizes that we need to try new strategies in our work to end domestic and gender based violence. A Safe Way Forward is going to be a critical component of the work the City is doing to reframe interventions for people causing harm and I congratulate ACS for their efforts."

"At Safe Horizon, we know that living in a home with violence and abuse has a significant impact on children. We also know that children who witness domestic violence can heal when offered appropriate counseling services and interventions; and they do best when they grow up with healthy, safe and loving families," said **Safe Horizon CEO Ariel Zwang**. "Also, many survivors and their children want or need to remain connected to the person causing harm, but want them to get help and the violence to end. I applaud ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell and his leadership team for being responsive to what survivors are telling us and providing critical services and interventions for the whole family via A Safe Way Forward. My colleagues and I at Safe Horizon look forward to working with our partners at ACS and Children's Aid Society to provide these much-needed comprehensive services for families facing domestic violence."

"We are grateful for this investment in much-needed services for families experiencing domestic violence. Children's Aid believes strongly that including persons causing harm in the service model is vital to establishing safety and stability for children and families, and putting an end to the intergenerational transmission of abuse. We are looking forward to partnering with ACS on this groundbreaking work," said **Phoebe Boyer, Children's Aid, President and CEO**.

“In order to address the stain of domestic violence in our society, it is imperative that we take measures to prevent it from occurring in the first place. ‘The Safe Way Forward’ program has the potential to achieve true prevention by offering clinical intervention at the right time. I commend Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Hansell, New York City’s Administration of Children’s Services (ACS), and all of the advocate groups that helped craft this innovative plan.” Said **NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair of the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Social Services.**

“We know that domestic violence is devastating for families, which is why this program from ACS is such an important way of dealing with the effects of it. This type of intervention treats the family unit as a whole and from all angles so that there can be positive resolution. I look forward to seeing it put to use,” said **NYS Senator Diane Savino.**

“Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence are cycles of behavior. Supporting survivors means not just providing services to help them heal, but also creating programs and services to address this behavior and to prevent future violence. A Safe Way Forward is a great step to making sure we treat the root and results of this violence,” **NYS Senator Persaud said.**

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