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STAY-AT-HOME ISN'T SAFE FOR SOME KIDS

79% of child sexual abuse victims reveal living with their perpetrators, stuck, unable to leave.

May 18, 2020, Bedford, NH. - Since the COVID-19 pandemic has forced New Hampshire schools online and eliminated in-person student/teacher interaction, reports of child sexual abuse have fallen sharply, according to the Granite State Children's Alliance, New Hampshire's network of Child Advocacy Centers.

"With learning online instead of in-class, teachers just don't have the same vantage point to evaluate their students' wellbeing," said Granite State Children's Alliance CEO, Joy Barrett. "Our concern is what we don't see. We can't expect video chat to convey manifestations of physical abuse or sexual abuse. And even that narrow window is closing with the school year, further isolating victims."

The National Sexual Assault hotline operated by RAINN recently revealed that more than half of all calls were from minors, 79% of whom reported living with their perpetrator. The national non-profit expects reports of child abuse to increase significantly as stay-at-home orders are lifted.

As the school year comes to an end and child victims have even less contact with adults outside of their home who may potentially observe signs of abuse and make a report, child advocates are promoting free online educational tools to inform the public at large. "We can't just rely on child-facing professionals and caregivers to report suspected abuse and neglect. It's imperative we engage all adults. Each and every one of us can be the first responder for a child victim of abuse," said Ms. Barrett.

KNOW & TELL, the public engagement and educational program of the Granite State Children's Alliance, provides free online learning tools and other resources to educate adults to know the signs of child abuse and neglect and tell authorities when they suspect a child victim needs help.

New educational tools for recognizing and reporting abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic including five actions all adults can take to protect children from abuse and neglect, warning signs of abuse that may be recognized during video communication and tips for communicating during remote learning are now available and free to the public at www.KNOWandTELL.org.

To get people's attention, South Boston filmmaker Terrence F. Hayes directed a public service announcement using phantom car crashes. "With everyone's mind consumed by the pandemic, I had to create something visually arresting to stop them in their tracks and pay attention to another clear and present public health crisis," said Hayes, who co-wrote the PSA titled "What We Don't See" with writer David McHugh.

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The Granite State Children's Alliance is the Chapter organization providing training, technical assistance and statewide representation for the network of Nationally Accredited Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in New Hampshire www.cac-nh.org.

KNOW & TELL is a professional development program of the Granite State Children's Alliance developed in collaboration with statewide child facing agencies and stakeholders. It is all our responsibility to protect children from abuse. KNOW & TELL educates all adults to KNOW the signs of abuse and TELL responsible authorities when they recognize a child needs help www.KNOWandTELL.org.

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