



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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## **A Strong Start for the DA's Innovative Domestic Violence Acute Response Team**

The COVID pandemic had a profound impact on every corner of our community. Across Colorado, including Boulder County, there has been a stark and concerning increase in domestic violence cases – as predicted. The dynamics of the pandemic, including mandated isolation, financial challenges and increased levels of stress and anxiety, strongly correlated to a rise in the frequency and severity of domestic violence.

The District Attorney's Office prioritizes the prosecution of domestic violence abusers. The Office saw a critical need to improve our response and created an innovative, victim-centered approach to the investigation and prosecution of these important cases. The Office created the Domestic Violence Acute Response Team (DV ART). This team of two prosecutors and an investigator possesses specialized skills and experience, as well as the use of best practices to more effectively address victim safety and offender accountability.

DV ART's approach is unique in Colorado and has already produced measured success. **Since its inception, DV ART has implemented its acute response strategy on 263 misdemeanor and 125 felony domestic violence cases.** DV ART has, also, partnered with the law enforcement agencies in Boulder County and several community-based resource providers to enhance victim safety.

DV ART's primary focus is on immediate contact with domestic violence victims to ascertain information about the victim and offender beyond what is reported to police, also, to build trust with the victim. DV ART seeks to learn about unreported violence, threats, access to firearms and other coercive/controlling behavior. Those factors enable prosecutors to more effectively assess and respond to lethality risk and offender danger. The early collection of more comprehensive information strengthens criminal cases, thereby increasing the likelihood of appropriate offender accountability. The Team's immediate contact with a victim enables the Team to connect victims with community service partners to provide victims with critical support and resources.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Anne Kelly stated, “We are very excited about the results we have already seen through implementation of this unique, important project. We are grateful and inspired by the partnership and support we have received from community.”

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, “Domestic violence cases require immediate attention. By quickly connecting with victims, we build more trust and stronger cases. This innovative program is making a real difference, thanks to the work of our team.”