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## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS FACE UNIQUE DANGERS DURING THE PANDEMIC, FIND HELP AT HUBBARD HOUSE**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla., March 24, 2020** – For survivors of domestic violence, the coronavirus (COVID-19) is not the only threat to their health and safety. In fact, it may not be the most dangerous threat they face, rather it's being home alone with an ever-escalating abuser. This is the reason that, even during the pandemic, Hubbard House remains open, on the frontline, to provide help and hope for survivors of domestic violence as it has done for the past 44 years.

“We know that domestic violence increases when survivors and their children are isolated with their abusers,” explained Hubbard House CEO Dr. Gail A. Patin, “so, during this pandemic, our hotline remains operational 24/7. Our emergency shelter doors remain open, too, and we’ll receive survivors until we reach capacity. Once we reach capacity, we will still make room for survivors in highly lethal, life-threatening circumstances. We’ll continue to safety plan and support survivors in any way we can. Their safety is our primary concern.”

The pandemic offers unique opportunities for abusers to gain or maintain power and control over their partners. Abusers may, for example, tell their partners they have the virus and that no one will help them; threaten their partners with eviction from shared homes leading to homelessness and exposure to the virus; deny their partners vital medical treatment; or withhold resources necessary to take care of medical or other needs, and this is just the beginning.

“Abuse is about power and control,” explained Patin, “and in a pandemic, abusers know exactly how they can use the present health crisis to manipulate and keep the victim isolated from life-saving help. That’s why we’re here. We want survivors to know, we’re here for them. They are not alone.”

Hubbard House acknowledges that the current situation can make it more difficult for survivors to avail themselves of services, so they suggest reaching out to the hotline at

(904) 354-3114 when it is safe to call. This will allow an advocate to assess their situation and share what options are currently available as this pandemic continues to change our way of life. Survivors who have unmonitored access to the Internet can also research safety planning information and find other online resources. Hubbard House encourages survivors to clear their browsing histories when they are done searching for safety planning or related information.

Hubbard House suggests survivors keep charged cell phones with them at all times, so they can reach out to the police if they fear or experience physical domestic violence.

Hubbard House is a full-service certified domestic violence center providing prevention and intervention to domestic violence survivors and their families in Duval and Baker counties in Northeast Florida.

Hubbard House has been awarded the coveted Charity Navigator 4-star rating seven times for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

Individuals who are in an abusive relationship, or know someone who is, are urged to call Hubbard House's 24-hour domestic violence hotline at (904) 354-3114.

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