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### UAA Releases Study on Domestic Violence and Sex Assault/Sexual Abuse of Minor Cases

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – The evaluation of criminal justice processes from a bird’s eye perspective is difficult for law enforcement and prosecution agencies to undertake. In 2013, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Department of Law (Law) partnered with the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) housed at the University of Alaska Anchorage to do just that. The AJSAC was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics to complete the Alaska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Case Processing Project: Descriptive Analysis of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Incidents Closed by the Alaska State Troopers: 2008 – 2011. The intention of DPS’ collaboration with the university is to embrace and learn from the results from the study – a step towards data-driven policymaking and maximizing the use of very limited departmental resources.

The results of the project have potential implications in a number of arenas including resource allocation, training for criminal justice professionals, as well as prevention work:

- Sample assessment and analysis of sexual assault/sexual abuse of minor (SA/SAM) and domestic violence (DV) case investigations closed by the Alaska State Troopers in calendar years 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.
- Nearly 1/3 of all SA/SAM cases analyzed came from the Yukon-Kuskokwim region of Alaska with Bethel Enforcement having investigated 24% of them; Alaska Bureau of Investigations units across the state investigated another 38% of all SA/SAM cases.
- Palmer Enforcement and Fairbanks Enforcement comprised nearly 39% of all DV cases examined
- Average age of SA/SAM suspects was about 31.8 years of age, while the average age of the SA/SAM victims was 17.8 years of age.
- The average age of both DV suspects and DV victims was 32.1 years of age.
- Overall SA/SAM and DV incidents were likely to involve victims and suspects belonging to the same racial/ethnic group.
- About 60% of sex crime cases referred for criminal charges by DPS were declined by Department of Law at the screening level; 76% of the cases that were accepted resulted in a conviction.
- About 83% of domestic violence cases referred to Department of Law were accepted; about 79% of those cases accepted resulted in a conviction.

- The study also supported what many domestic violence and sexual assault professionals already know – these are not issues of “stranger danger,” which is what children and youth until recent years were being prepared against. Someone is much more likely to be assaulted by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Stranger sexual assault accounts for less than 5% of Alaska State Troopers’ sexual assault cases.

DPS and Law look forward to continued collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage. Meaningful assessments of the services the departments offer the public is vital to progress.

The study’s principal investigator, Dr. Brad Myrstol, welcomes any questions pertaining to the study’s methodology. Copies of the full report can be accessed on the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center’s website ([www.uaa.alaska.edu/ajsac](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ajsac)).