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SCRIPT BELOW:

EVEN IN THE BEST OF TIMES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGENCIES SEE BRISK BUSINESS IN NORTH CAROLINA. IN THE MIDST OF COURTHOUSE AND GOVERNMENT CLOSURES DURING THE **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**, ADVOCATES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS SAY YOU CAN STILL GET HELP.

N.C. SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE **CHERI BEASLEY** CLOSED COURTHOUSES AROUND THE STATE FOR ALL BUT THE MOST URGENT BUSINESS THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF APRIL.

WHILE MOST COURT HEARINGS ARE BEING POSTPONED, PEOPLE CAN STILL FILE FOR PROTECTION ORDERS IN MOST COURTHOUSES. IN SOME AREAS, YOU CAN FILE FOR A PROTECTION ORDER REMOTELY, AND SOME HEARINGS REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL CONTINUE EITHER OVER VIDEO LINK OR TELEPHONE, **DEPENDING ON THE COUNTY**.

BUT THE PANDEMIC HAS UPENDED THE USUAL PROCESS, AND VICTIMS AND ADVOCATES ARE HAVING TO NAVIGATE NEW GROUND IN WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PATCHWORK, COUNTY-BY-COUNTY SYSTEM.

WHILE STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE NEW CORONAVIRUS RESTRICT NONESSENTIAL TRAVEL, MANY OF THOSE ORDERS EXEMPT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS, PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND THOSE SEEKING MEDICAL CARE.

EXPERTS GENERALLY EXPECT A SURGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS DURING TIMES OF ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL UPHEAVAL. A STUDY SHOWED FAMILIES THAT EXPERIENCED JOB LOSSES OR OTHER ECONOMIC SHOCKS DURING THE GREAT RECESSION WERE **MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE** DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN ... CHILDREN ARE NOT IN SCHOOL, AND TEACHERS OR COUNSELORS WHO WOULD NORMALLY REPORT ABUSE DO NOT SEE THEIR STUDENTS ANYMORE.

SINCE MEDICAL AND DENTAL PROVIDERS HAVE CEASED ALL NONESSENTIAL PROCEDURES AND APPOINTMENTS, MEDICAL STAFFERS WHO SCREEN FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE NOT SEEING THEIR PATIENTS.

THOSE LOOKING FOR HELP CAN FIND RESOURCES AT THE **N.C. COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WEBSITE** OR CALL THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE 800-799-7233.

YOU CAN FIND THIS STORY AND MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO THE CORONAVIRUS IN NORTH CAROLINA BY GOING TO CAROLINA-PUBLIC-PRESS-DOT-ORG.* THIS IS STEPHANIE CARSON REPORTING.