

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 03, 2012

Contact: 475-3324 ext. 5020

## **LaniKate Task Force Works to Prevent and Reduce Child Sexual Abuse**

*Hagatña, Guam-* A little under a year ago, *The LaniKate Protehi Y Famagu'on-ta Act* was enacted, creating a task force working to prevent and reduce child sexual abuse from occurring on our island. The LaniKate Task Force submitted its first report today to the Office of the Governor and members of the Legislature.

Since its enactment in September of last year, the task force, comprised of various government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private companies, met regularly to discuss an action plan on how to accomplish the goals of the legislation.

Intervention through educational means and expanding existing services were discussed in great detail. Providing training for school personnel, developing age-appropriate curriculum for students, educating and disseminating information to parents and guardians on the early warning signs of sexual abuse, expanding current counseling services and resources for those affected by abuse and providing emotional support were among some key elements identified by task force members to combat child sexual abuse.

As mandated by the act, gathering information on sexual abuse was conducted. 2011 statistical reporting from various agencies shows how much of a dilemma this has become. Guam Police Department (GPD) reports indicate that 74 arrests were made for criminal sexual conduct and 22 arrests were made for forcible rape. Data provided by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) indicates 42 convictions of criminal sexual conduct and 126 criminal sexual conduct cases pending. In the juvenile division of the OAG, there were 22 juveniles charged with offenses relating to some form of sexual abuse. Referrals in excess of 1, 800 were reported to the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) in which a total of 2,512 children were involved. Child Protective Services also reported 434 children were subjected to sexual abuse and indicated that there were 78 children referred to the agency for teen pregnancy.

“These numbers are staggering... there is no question that Guam is in need of an expansion in its current services and program for victims, and that a more comprehensive system needs to be developed to ensure victims are provided with the full realm of therapeutic services needed for both short-term and long-term treatment,” said Attorney General Rapadas, presiding officer of the task force.

“I want to thank all the members of the task force for their commitment, dedication, and diligence as they worked for our island’s children. The work continues however, as this is the first fundamental step needed to initiate an island-wide commitment in the right direction.”

Reports and testimony from individuals, government of Guam agencies, community-based organizations, and any other public and private organizations are welcomed and can be submitted to [law@guamattorneygeneral.com](mailto:law@guamattorneygeneral.com).

###