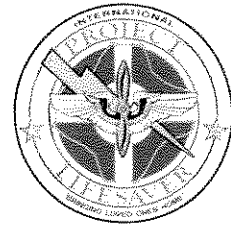


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**Thursday, May 7, 2015, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo Announces Partnership
Between the State of New York and Project Lifesaver International**

**State to Provide Personal Transmitters to 50 Agencies Statewide to Track Children With
Autism or Other Disorders That Put Them at Risk For Wandering**

Port St. Lucie, Florida, Friday, May 8, 2015 On Thursday, May 7, 2015 New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced a partnership between New York State and Project Lifesaver International to provide life-saving equipment and training to 50 New York law enforcement agencies. This partnership additionally coincides with an announcement by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America a long-time strategic partner of Project Lifesaver who awarded a grant of \$12,500 directly to Project Lifesaver to make 50 more transmitters available in New York State for adults with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a partnership between New York State and Project Lifesaver International to provide life-saving equipment and training for 50 law enforcement agencies to assist in missing child searches. The state will provide agencies with nearly 600 Project Lifesaver tracking devices at no cost for use on children under 18 who may have autism, Down syndrome or another type of cognitive impairment that puts them at risk for wandering or becoming lost. The transmitters, which are worn on the wrist or ankle, emit a tracking signal that allows a child to be located quickly after going missing.

"This program will help give peace of mind to parents who have children with a cognitive impairment," Governor Cuomo said. "Not only will they be provided with the technology to more easily locate a missing child, but also have access to a trained support system that will be available at a moment's notice. I thank the law enforcement agencies who are partnering with us in this very important effort to help families across New York."

A total of 596 personal transmitters will be provided to agencies through an agreement between the state Division of Criminal Justice Services and Project Lifesaver, a non-profit organization that partners with law enforcement across the country. Agencies will receive the technology when they attend training, which began today in Saratoga County and is scheduled to be completed by the end of June.

Sheriffs' offices in the following 21 counties and the New York City and Nassau County police departments will each receive 13 personal transmitters for special needs children for the first time: Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Hamilton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Seneca, Sullivan, Washington and Wayne.

Additionally, sheriffs' offices that already partner with Project Lifesaver will each receive 11 transmitters to add to their existing supply so they can assist more children: Albany, Cayuga, Chenango, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Erie, Greene, Jefferson, Madison, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, St. Lawrence, Steuben, Suffolk, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Westchester and Yates.

The New York State Missing Persons Clearinghouse, part of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, is coordinating the initiative. Among other responsibilities, the Clearinghouse administers the state's Missing Child Alerts, which are activated when a child younger than 21 goes missing but the case doesn't meet AMBER Alert criteria, such as those involving children with disabilities or special needs.

Michael C. Green, executive deputy commissioner of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, said, "Staff members at DCJS are committed to identifying programs, initiatives and training that allow our local law enforcement partners to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. This partnership accomplishes that goal, as minutes matter when a child or adult goes missing. But perhaps more importantly, it also will give parents of special needs children another resource to help keep their sons or daughters safe."

Gene Saunders, chief executive officer and founder of Project Lifesaver, said, "I am extremely pleased to join with New York to provide this aid to public safety and protection to those with cognitive disorders, which may result in them wandering and becoming lost. Project Lifesaver is a proven non-profit program, which has resulted in its members rescuing almost 3,000 people in 16 years. New York has demonstrated, in working with Project Lifesaver, that it cares for its citizens and will work to protect them."

The state purchased the technology using approximately \$253,000 from its Missing and Exploited Children Special Revenue fund. New Yorkers may donate to the fund when they file their state income tax forms; those contributions must be used exclusively to enhance services provided by the Clearinghouse in connection with cases involving missing children younger than 18. Parents can contact the law enforcement agency in their county to see if their children are eligible for a free transmitter. All agencies receiving the technology must develop written criteria for priority distribution – for example, taking into account family income.

Project Lifesaver uses radio frequency tracking, which is reliable in wooded areas and in buildings and is less susceptible to signal blockage. Children enrolled in the program as a result of the state's agreement will receive either a wrist or ankle bracelet with an individualized tracking signal. If the child goes missing, their caregiver notifies the agency that provided the device and a trained emergency team responds. Most individuals who wander are found within a few miles from home and the Project Lifesaver technology can reduce search time from hours or days to minutes.

The New York State Missing Persons Clearinghouse is coordinating today's training in Saratoga County. Agencies receiving the technology must send two representatives to an initial training session, as well as an annual class, and actively publicize the availability of the program to encourage enrollment.

Saratoga County Sheriff Michael H. Zurlo said, "Since I became sheriff in 2014, I have heard from parents of children with autism and similar disorders asking me about trying to get a program like this in place in our county. I want to thank Governor Cuomo and the people at DCJS and the Missing Persons Clearinghouse for making it possible for us to help these parents deal with one of their worst fears and giving my agency the training and technology so we can safely locate a missing child and reunite them with their loved ones."

Saratoga County resident Jackie Roberts, the mother of a 7-year old boy with autism who will receive a transmitter, said, “As my son gets older and more active, I become more fearful that he will wander, and knowing that he will have this bracelet that will be able to track him down and bring him home quickly and safely eases that fear. We are very excited to be part of this amazing program that will truly help so many parents and their little ones.”

This partnership additionally coincides with an announcement by the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America partnering directly with Project Lifesaver to make 50 more transmitters available in New York State for adults with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia. Similar to children with autism and other cognitive disorders, these adults are at higher risk of walking away from their homes or places of care and getting lost and disoriented. The Alzheimer’s Foundation will work with Project Lifesaver to determine how those transmitters will be distributed to law enforcement.

“We are proud to continue our relationship with Project Lifesaver and to enable the organization to expand the law enforcement training and location services it provides to the people of New York State,” said Bert E. Brodsky, who serves as board chairman of the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America.

The Clearinghouse also administers Missing Vulnerable Adult Alerts, which are activated when an adult who is at least 18 years old and has a cognitive impairment, mental disability or brain disorder goes missing. So far this year, 29 alerts have been activated, involving 27 individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia and two with autism. Missing Child and Missing Adult alerts are activated at the request of law enforcement. Alert criteria require that the missing individual must be at credible risk of harm as a result of their disappearance. More information about the Clearinghouse and its services is available [here](#).

To learn more about Project Lifesaver visit: www.projectlifesaver.org or contact:

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