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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES LEGISLATURE TO REQUIRE IMPROVED MEDICAL CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

Madigan's Legislation Would Expand the Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act to Ensure All Survivors Have Timely Access to Care

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged the Illinois General Assembly to pass legislation that will help improve medical care for survivors of sexual assault and increase successful prosecutions of sexual assaults. Madigan was joined by state Rep. Ann Williams, sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), advocates for sexual assault survivors and other health care professionals in demanding that Illinois hospitals provide appropriately trained staff in their emergency departments to care for the thousands of children, women and men who are sexually assaulted every year.

House Bill 5245 will expand the Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act to ensure that all survivors of sexual assault are treated in a timely manner by health care professionals who are specially trained to conduct forensic examinations of sexual assault survivors. It also allows sexual abuse survivors under the age of the 13 to receive specialized care at an approved pediatric health care facility.

"Survivors of sexual assault deserve to have compassionate and trained medical care when they go to the hospital," Madigan said. "I have tried for years to work with hospitals to voluntarily do what's right for sexual assault survivors, but there is still a serious lack of appropriate care for sexual assault survivors in Illinois."

Since 2003, Madigan's office has provided classroom training to more than 1,500 clinicians across the state, yet only 300 of those nurses have completed the clinical training required to become a practicing SANE in large part due to a lack of support from the hospitals where they work. At present, only 150 SANEs are practicing in emergency departments in Illinois hospitals and no hospital has a 24/7 SANE program. SANEs are trained to collect physical evidence following a sexual assault, respond to the psychological needs of a survivor, and testify in court. House Bill 5245 is part of Madigan's continuing effort to improve response to crime victims and increase successful prosecutions to ensure public safety.

Under the legislation, hospitals would need to ensure that a sexual assault survivor receives specialized care by a qualified medical provider within 90 minutes of arriving at a hospital. The legislation also requires ongoing education to ensure that emergency room medical personnel such as physicians, physician assistants and nurses are trained to treat survivors of sexual assaults appropriately.

In addition, House Bill 5245 seeks to lessen the trauma of forensic exams on child survivors of sexual abuse by giving survivors the option to undergo forensic examination in more familiar settings. Under the measure, sexual abuse survivors under the age of 13 can receive medical forensic services at an approved pediatric health care facility. An approved pediatric health care facility must also ensure that medical services are provided by a qualified medical provider.

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Michael Unes and Sen. Julie Morrison, is supported by a bipartisan group of legislators as well as the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Illinois Sheriffs' Association, Illinois State's Attorneys Association, Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Rape Victim Advocates, Illinois NOW (National Organization of Women), International Association of Forensic Nurses – Illinois Chapter, and the Illinois Emergency Nurses Association. House Bill 5245 has been introduced in the House, and the Attorney General is urging lawmakers to take up the measure when the legislature reconvenes in Springfield next week.

Attorney General Madigan is a national leader and has worked for more than a decade to protect survivors of sexual violence and strengthen their rights. Madigan drafted and successfully worked to pass legislation that improves the response of law enforcement to sexual assault survivors through evidence-based, trauma-informed, and victim-centered policies, procedures, training and practice. She also worked to pass the Preventing Sexual Violence on Campus Act to set standards for all Illinois colleges and universities to prevent and respond to sexual violence, as well as a law to eliminate Illinois' criminal statutes of limitation for all felony criminal sexual assault and sexual abuse crimes against children. In addition, Madigan successfully advocated for enhanced crime victims' rights under the state's Constitution to ensure victims have a voice in the criminal justice system.

Madigan also initiated a law that made Illinois the first state in the country to mandate the testing of sexual assault evidence kits. Madigan's office also funds dozens of Illinois organizations that provide critical victim services to sexual assault survivors.

Attorney General Madigan's Crime Victim Services Division manages programs that provide assistance to crime victims and service providers. For more information about the Crime Victims Services Division or the rights afforded to survivors of crime in Illinois, please visit Madigan's [website](#) or call her office's toll-free Crime Victims' Assistance Line: 1-800-228-3368 or 1-877-398-1130 (TTY).

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