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MADIGAN APPLAUDS COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF MEASURE 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 applauded the House Human Services Committee for passing legislation that will provide appropriate medical care for survivors of sexual assault and increase successful prosecutions of sexual assaults.

House Bill 5245, sponsored by Rep. Michael Unes, 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 13 to receive specialized care at an approved pediatric health care facility. The legislation passed the committee unanimously and will move to the full House.

"Survivors of sexual assault need specialized care from trained professionals when they go to the hospital, and this legislation is a step toward ensuring that the physical and emotional needs of survivors are met," Madigan said. "I appreciate the committee's support and encourage the full House to pass this important measure."

"Children who have been victims of sexual abuse and assault deserve the highest quality and most compassionate care that the state of Illinois can provide," said Rep. Unes. "This legislation gives a voice to the voiceless and ensures that this most vulnerable population is cared for by the most qualified professionals."

"The road to recovery for survivors of sexual assault should begin immediately after the attack. It is critical that the medical professionals she first encounters are trained to help survivors start the long journey toward healing and obtaining justice," Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, one of the measure's House sponsors, said.

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 responses 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 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 Advocacy

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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