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MADIGAN APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF BILL REQUIRING 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 Illinois House of Representatives for passing legislation that will ensure survivors of sexual assault receive appropriate medical care 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 House unanimously and will move to the Senate.

"Sexual assault survivors need and deserve compassionate care that specifically treats the physical and emotional trauma they have experienced," Madigan said. "We have already changed our laws to better respond to survivors of sexual assault in the criminal justice system. Now hospitals need to make good on their promises to improve medical care provided to the thousands of adults and children who experience these horrible traumas each year."

"Child survivors of sexual assault are particularly vulnerable, and it is imperative that they receive highly specialized treatment," Unes said. "I appreciate the Attorney General's continued advocacy for crime victims, and I thank my colleagues for supporting this important measure."

"The first encounter a survivor of rape or sexual assault has following the attack can lay the foundation for a survivor's recovery, which is why it is so critical for first responders and medical personnel to have specialized training," Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, one of the measure's House sponsors said.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) are trained to collect physical evidence following a sexual assault, respond to the psychological needs of a survivor, and testify in court. 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.

House Bill 5245 is part of Madigan's continuing effort to improve responses to crime victims and increase successful prosecutions to ensure public safety. The legislation would require hospitals 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 on child survivors of sexual abuse by giving them the option to undergo the necessary and critical 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. The approved pediatric health care facility must 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 Advocates, Illinois NOW (National Organization of Women), International Association of Forensic Nurses – Illinois Chapter, and the Illinois Emergency Nurses Association.

Attorney General Madigan is a national leader due to her work 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 a 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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