



May 31, 2018

MADIGAN APPLAUDS LEGISLATURE FOR PASSING BILL TO IMPROVE MEDICAL CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

Madigan's Legislation Would 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 and Sen. Julie Morrison, 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 approved pediatric health care facilities. The House voted unanimously to concur with the amended legislation passed unanimously by the Senate last week, and HB 5245 will now be sent to the governor to be signed into law.

"It is past time for Illinois hospitals to provide appropriately trained medical professionals for the thousands of women, children and men who need emergency treatment and specialized care after a sexual assault," Madigan said. "Well-trained medical professionals help survivors heal from the physical and emotional trauma of sexual assault, and they also help survivors pursue justice against offenders, reducing the number of potential victims."

"The effects of a sexual assault can last a lifetime, particularly when the victim is a child. Survivors, especially children, deserve specialized care that treats their physical wounds and those that cannot be seen as easily," Unes said. "This legislation is the result of more than a year of negotiations, and I appreciate leadership and advocacy for survivors. I urge the governor to sign this critical legislation."

"Sexual assault survivors deserve to be treated promptly by medical professionals who have received specialized training to not just treat the survivor's physical trauma, but to collect evidence that is critical to enabling survivors to seek justice," Morrison said. "I would like to thank the Attorney General for her work to support survivors, and I look forward to this incredibly important bill being signed into law."

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 a more familiar setting. 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 the medical services are provided by a SANE or specially trained physician.

The legislation is supported by a bipartisan group of legislators as well as the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Illinois Sheriffs' Association, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois State's Attorneys Association, Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois, OSF Healthcare, 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 in protecting survivors of sexual violence and strengthening 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 and training and obtained federal funding to provide the training required under the law. 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).

-30-

[Return to May 2018 Press Releases](#)

