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MADIGAN: NEW LAW WILL IMPROVE MEDICAL CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS IN ILLINOIS

New Law Initiated by Madigan Will Ensure Illinois Hospitals Provide Specialized Medical Care to Sexual Assault Survivors

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a new law will require better care for survivors of sexual assault in Illinois. The new law, initiated by Madigan, makes Illinois a national leader in providing specialized care to conduct examinations and treat emotional trauma in the aftermath of sexual assault crimes.

House Bill 5245, sponsored by Rep. Michael Unes and Sen. Julie Morrison, was signed into law earlier today. The new law will expand the Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act to ensure that Illinois hospitals provide specialized sexual assault care in emergency rooms, which will include Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs). SANEs are trained to collect physical evidence following a sexual assault, respond to the medical and psychological needs of a survivor and testify in court. Despite years of SANE training provided by Madigan's office to nurses in Illinois, few hospitals currently provide specialized care for sexual assault victims.

"Illinois hospitals must now provide sexual assault survivors with specialized compassionate medical care," Madigan said. "This new law will ensure survivors receive the care they deserve to treat the physical and emotional trauma they have endured after a sexual assault."

"This law will ensure that the trauma of a sexual assault is not compounded when survivors, particularly children, undergo the lengthy examinations that are necessary to collect evidence," Unes said. "I appreciate the work of the Attorney General and advocacy groups to make sure that under this law, all survivors receive prompt treatment and child survivors have the ability to be treated at pediatric health care facilities."

"The thousands of women, children and men who are sexually assaulted deserve nothing less than prompt treatment by medical professionals who have been trained to address trauma while simultaneously conducting thorough medical forensic examinations," Morrison said. "I was proud to work with the Attorney General to support survivors, and I will continue to push to improve care and services for the survivors of these unimaginable crimes."

The law is part of Madigan's continuing effort to improve the response and care of sexual assault victims and increase successful prosecutions to ensure public safety. Under the new law, hospitals must ensure that a sexual assault survivor receives specialized care by a qualified medical provider within 90 minutes of arriving at a hospital by Jan. 1, 2022. The law also requires ongoing education to ensure that emergency room medical personnel such as attending physicians, physician assistants and nurses are trained to treat survivors of sexual assaults appropriately.

In addition, the law seeks to lessen the trauma on child survivors of sexual abuse by giving them the option to undergo the necessary and critical medical forensic examination in a more familiar setting. Under the law, sexual abuse survivors under the age of 13 can receive acute medical forensic services at an approved pediatric health care facility beginning Jan. 1, 2019. The approved pediatric health care facility must ensure that the medical services are provided by a SANE or specially trained physician.

Since 2003, Madigan's office has provided classroom training to more than 1,600 nurses across the state, yet only 315 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 188 SANEs are practicing in emergency departments in Illinois hospitals and no hospital has a 24/7 SANE program.

The law 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.

Attorney General Madigan's Crime Victim Services Division manages programs that provide assistance to crime victims and service providers. For more information or information about 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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