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Wisconsin Rape Victims Still Lacking Compassionate Care
New Survey Shows Much Work Remains Two Years After Law Passed

Madison – Two years following the passage of the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims (CCRV) Act, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is sharing the highlight results of a recent follow-up survey of the care provided to rape victims in Wisconsin emergency rooms. The new report demonstrates that while significant progress has been made, many Wisconsin hospitals are still not in compliance with the law.

While the [CCRV Act](#) states that all hospital emergency rooms must provide information regarding emergency contraception (EC) and must dispense EC to the rape victim upon her request, survey results indicate that only 78 percent of hospitals offer EC immediately on-site. This is a dramatic improvement from 2006 data when only 58 percent reported that this was standard policy; however, at least 22 percent of hospitals still appear to be non-compliant with the law. In addition, only 44 percent of hospitals claiming to provide CCRV consistently had written policies in compliance with the law.

"This legislation was passed to help victims become survivors and to prevent them being re-traumatized by an unintended pregnancy by her attacker," says Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Jean Coopman-Jansen. "It's disappointing to learn from these survey results that Wisconsin rape victims may still have to shop around for the compassionate and comprehensive care they need and deserve."

The survey showed that barriers to compliance of the law included "lack of available resources" and "individual provider beliefs or variations in provider practices". Other barriers, including "unfamiliarity with the law" and "religious affiliation of hospital," were commonly noted.

It is estimated that over 300,000 women are sexually assaulted in the United States every year and an estimated 25,000 of those women will become pregnant as a result. Over 88 percent of these pregnancies could be prevented through the use of EC.

"Emergency contraception provides essential, medically supported pregnancy prevention for a rape victim," says Jacqui Callari-Robinson with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "By failing to offer emergency contraception to rape victims, we fail to provide them with the standard of care they need."

In response to this follow up survey, WAWH is releasing a toolkit to assist Wisconsin hospital and providers to reach full compliance. This twenty-page guide will be released later this month and includes sample protocols, a directory of community resources, and a copy of the law.

If anyone encounters a Wisconsin hospital that is not complying with the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims law, they are encouraged to contact the Bureau of Health Services at (608) 264-9887 or (414) 227-4556.

To view a copy of the 2009-2010 Compassionate Care Survey Highlight Report and for more information about CCRV, visit the WAWH website: www.supportwomenshealth.org.

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*The mission of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is to advance comprehensive women's health in Wisconsin by engaging, educating, empowering and mobilizing individuals and organizations.
To learn more about WAWH, visit our website: www.supportwomenshealth.org*