



Wisconsin Alliance for
Women's Health

www.supportwomenshealth.org

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Survey Demonstrates Lack of Compassionate Care for Wisconsin Rape Victims

Wisconsin women deserve access to comprehensive health care and information

Madison – The Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) commends the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition (CCRV) for further confirming the need to support and pass the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill (AB 305 / SB 166). Today, the CCRV Coalition released highlight results from a survey which revealed that only 1/3 of Wisconsin hospital emergency rooms are providing emergency contraception (EC) to rape victims without exception.

Eighty-nine percent of the 123 hospitals surveyed responded and provided information that 42% of Wisconsin emergency rooms are not providing EC on-site to rape victims.

"Following a rape, victims deserve the right to regain control over their lives and make fully-informed decisions about their health," said WAWH Director Sara Finger. "It's outrageous to expect someone who has just experienced the trauma of a rape to go through the additional trauma of shopping around to find comprehensive health care to avoid an unintended pregnancy. Making *Compassionate Care* law would help ensure that rape victims don't face that kind of added trauma in Wisconsin. "

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% of these pregnancies could be prevented through the use of EC.

EC is simply a concentrated dose of ordinary birth control pills. Approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), EC can prevent pregnancy when taken up to 120 hours after unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure. EC has no effect on an established pregnancy.

EC has been endorsed as safe and effective by the medical community. The American College of Emergency Physicians which includes EC in its sexual assault protocols, and the American College of Gynecology explicitly recommend that EC should be offered to all victims if they are at risk of pregnancy.

"Emergency contraception should be the standard of care for all health care facilities that treat victims of sexual assault. Requiring emergency health care facilities to provide EC is a common-sense step we can take to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies that result from sexual assault, and offer some comfort to rape victims," said Finger.

To view a copy of the CCRV Survey Highlight Report and to find more information on Compassionate Care for Rape Victims, please visit the WAWH website at: www.wiawh.org

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The mission of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is to advance women's health by creating an environment in which the public and elected officials confidently support women's health policy.

To learn more about WAWH, visit our website: www.supportwomenshealth.org