



For Immediate Release
December 3, 2007

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RAPE VICTIMS CLOSE TO RECEIVING COMPASSIONATE CARE THEY DESERVE
Coalition Anticipates Upcoming Assembly Vote

Madison, WI- As promised by Assembly leadership in late October, members of the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition (CCRV) anticipate an Assembly vote next week on Assembly Bill 377/Senate Bill 129, a bill that would ensure rape victims learn about emergency contraception (EC) in every Wisconsin emergency room, and receive the medication upon request to prevent a pregnancy following assault.

In October, bill authors Republican Representative Terry Musser of Black River Falls and Democratic Representative Mark Pocan of Madison received a commitment from Assembly leadership that the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill would be scheduled for a vote by the end of the year. Since Tuesday, December 11 marks the last Assembly Floor Session date for 2007, a vote is expected to take place on that date.

The state Senate overwhelmingly passed the original Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill in May by a vote of 27-6. Now, 186 days later, the Assembly has the opportunity to pass the bill without amendments. Governor Doyle has committed to signing the bill into law once passed through both state houses.

In the United States, more than 25,000 women a year become pregnant as a result of rape. 16,000 of these pregnancies end in abortion. While AMA guidelines promote increased access to EC for rape victims, a recent CCRV Coalition study showed that only one-third of Wisconsin hospitals unconditionally provide EC to rape victims.

“With passage of this bill in the Assembly, we finally have an opportunity to see that ideal treatment of rape victims become law in our state,” said Keeley Crowley, Coordinator of Holy Family Memorial's Sexual Assault Resource Center in Manitowoc. “We can't erase the injustice a victim has experienced as a result of an attack, but this law will go a long way in reducing the stress and pain she endures while seeking health care.”

Members of the coalition have worked tirelessly over the last few years to raise awareness of and support for the critical legislation, including deeming October Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Month in Wisconsin.

“Providing all rape victims with the comprehensive, quality care they deserve is long overdue,” said Amanda Harrington, a rape survivor. “We hold Assembly leaders to their promise to schedule a vote and look forward to the long awaited passage of this important bill.”

For more information regarding Compassionate Care for Rape Victims, please visit: www.supportwomenshealth.org.

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American College of Nurse Midwives - WI Chapter • Brown County Coalition for Women's Health • Chippewa Valley Citizens for Women's Health • Citizens for Women's Health, Winnebago County • Community Advocates • Eau Claire County Coordinated Community Response Team • Friends of Abused Families, Inc. of Washington County • League of Women Voters of Wisconsin • Medical Students for Choice • NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin • National Association of Social Workers, WI Chapter • Options Fund, Inc • PAVE: People Against a Violent Environment, Beaver Dam • PAVE: Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment, Madison • Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin • Reach Counseling Services, Menasha • Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice WI • Republicans for Choice • Sexual Assault Treatment Center • Task Force on Family Violence • The Healing Center • United Council of UW Students • Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health • Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care • Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence • Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault • Wisconsin NOW • Wisconsin Women's Network Reproductive Rights Task Force • Women's Medical Fund



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PRESS RELEASE

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Rape Victim Advocates Look Forward to Assembly Vote

Madison – The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) looks forward to an upcoming vote on the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill. The bill requires hospitals to provide sexual assault victims with medically accurate information regarding emergency contraception and dispense emergency contraception to them upon request.

Assembly leadership has promised the bill's authors, Republican Representative Terry Musser and Democratic Representative Mark Pocan, that the bill will receive a vote before the end of the year. The last Assembly floor period of 2007 will occur between December 11 and December 13. Therefore, the vote should be scheduled during that period.

In May, the State Senate passed the bill without amendments on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 27-6. Sexual assault victim advocates are pleased the Assembly will finally take up the measure.

“WCASA is glad the State Assembly will soon have the opportunity to affirm that victims of sexual assault deserve nothing less than the professional standard of care in Wisconsin emergency rooms,” said Linda Morrison, Executive Director of WCASA.

American Medical Association guidelines require that victims of sexual assault be offered emergency contraception as part of standard medical treatment. However, a recent survey of state hospitals found only one-third of emergency rooms follow this requirement as a matter of policy.

“Providing victims with all available options allows them to begin to reassert control over their lives and is a first and important step on a long road toward healing,” said Morrison.

Morrison added, “Hospitals’ failure to provide EC as an option has had devastating results. In the United States, 25,000 women become pregnant as the result of rape. The majority of these pregnancies result in abortions.”

“WCASA is thankful for the elected officials, victim advocates and other organizations that have worked to see an Assembly vote take place,” said Morrison. “We expect Assembly leadership to hold to its word and schedule a vote for next week.”



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**WOMEN'S HEALTH ADVOCATES ANTICIPATE ASSEMBLY VOTE ON
COMPASSIONATE CARE FOR RAPE VICTIMS BILL**

Madison, WI – Women's health supporters, advocates for victims' rights, law enforcement officials, and health care providers are eagerly awaiting an Assembly floor vote next week on the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill. (SB 129 / AB 377)

The bill as originally written would ensure that all Wisconsin emergency rooms provide rape victims with information about and access to emergency contraception, giving them the chance to prevent pregnancy after an assault.

"We are thrilled that the Assembly leadership, with strong bipartisan support led by Rep. Terry Musser (R-Black River Falls) and Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Madison), has promised to hold a vote on Compassionate Care during next week's floor session," said Kelda Helen Roys, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin, the political leader of the reproductive rights movement.

"Right now, thousands of Wisconsin women receive substandard care in Wisconsin emergency rooms after being raped – only a third of hospitals routinely provide rape victims with counseling and access to emergency contraception¹ – even though it is part of the American Medical Association's standard of care," continued Roys. "With the passage of this bill, unamended, we look forward to every sexual assault survivor receiving the medical care she needs and deserves."

In May, the State Senate overwhelmingly passed the original form of the bill on a bipartisan vote of 27 to 6. According to several recent polls, over eighty percent of Wisconsin voters support the legislation.

Along with its partners in the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition, NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin has worked tirelessly to improve access to emergency birth control for sexual assault survivors.

Emergency contraception is a high dose of ordinary birth control pills that is highly effective at preventing pregnancy. For maximum effectiveness, it should be taken as soon as possible after sexual contact, but can help prevent pregnancy up to 120 hours after intercourse. If a woman is already pregnant, EC will not work; it cannot affect a pregnancy. For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.prochoicewisconsin.org/s04politicalupdates/legupdates.shtml#1>

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¹ According to a statewide study conducted by the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition

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Vote on Compassionate Care Expected this Month

Victims' Rights Advocates, Health Care Providers and Activists Call on Assembly to Pass Bill

Madison, WI- Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin (PPAWI) is activating and mobilizing supporters of the **Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill** (Assembly Bill 377/Senate Bill 129) in anticipation of an Assembly vote on the legislation.

In October, the Assembly leadership told the bill's authors, Representative Terry Musser (R- Black River Falls) and Representative Mark Pocan (D-Madison), that the **Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill** would be scheduled for a vote by the end of the year. A vote is expected to take place on Tuesday, December 11, the last Assembly Floor Session date in 2007. PPAWI is alerting thousands of activists through a series of Planned Parenthood Action Network email alerts and phone banks. PPAWI will also conduct a Virtual Day of Action for those bill supporters who will not be able to travel to the Capitol on the day of the vote.

"Rape survivors, and the people who love them and want to see them receive the compassionate care they deserve, are eagerly anticipating the passage of this bill," said PPAWI Executive Director Lisa Boyce. "Planned Parenthood activists have dedicated the past several years to ensuring that this bill becomes law, so that women who survive the trauma of rape receive the comprehensive medical care that they deserve, no matter where they live. On their behalf, we urge members of the Assembly to vote on and pass this critical legislation without amendments."

The **Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill** would ensure rape victims learn about emergency contraception (EC) in every Wisconsin emergency room, and receive the medication upon request to prevent a pregnancy following assault. The bill passed the Senate with strong bipartisan support 186 days ago and counting. Governor Doyle has committed to signing the bill into law once it passes through the Assembly.

In the United States, more than 25,000 women a year become pregnant as a result of rape. 16,000 of these pregnancies end in abortion. While AMA guidelines promote increased access to EC for rape victims, a recent Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition study showed that only one-third of Wisconsin hospitals unconditionally provide EC to rape victims.

"Telling rape victims about EC and dispensing it upon their request is the standard of care, and it's been ignored by too many hospitals for too long," said Boyce. "It's time to right this wrong. Passing Compassionate Care is the least we can do for victims of rape."

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