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**Media Contact: Sara Finger
(608) 251-1039**

Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health Urges Support for Compassionate Care
Notes Wisconsin women deserve access to comprehensive health care and information

Madison – After today's Senate Committee on Health hearing, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health affirms that Wisconsin women who are victims of rape deserve to have immediate access in all Wisconsin emergency rooms to emergency contraception (EC), a safe and effective method to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

Today's hearing was crowded with women's health supporters urging committee members to support the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Bill (SB 129) which would ensure that rape victims learn about emergency contraception (EC) in every Wisconsin hospital emergency room, and that EC would be dispensed upon request.

"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 pregnancies that result from sexual assault, and offer some comfort to rape victims," said WAWH Director Sara Finger. "EC would help teens, women and families avoid the often-devastating effects of unintended pregnancy."

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 80% of these pregnancies could be prevented through the use of EC.

EC is a concentrated dose of ordinary birth control pills. Approved for use by the U.S. 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 includes EC in its sexual assault protocols, and the American College of Gynecology explicitly recommends that EC should be offered to all victims if they are at risk of pregnancy.

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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*