



Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
600 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Good afternoon Senator Moen and members of the Senate Committee on Health, Utilities, Veterans and Military Affairs. My name is Lisa Macaulay and I am the Policy Specialist for the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA). I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 391, which would require a hospital to provide a victim of sexual assault with consent, information and emergency contraception. Thank you for holding a public hearing on this important piece of legislation.

We should make every effort to ensure that a sexual assault victim who has come in to a hospital is given every option available to them. Giving the victim or survivor the information on all of those options, stops the further victimization and trauma they experience.

We are well aware that this option is not going to be the option for every woman who is sexually assaulted, but we firmly believe that the information and medication be made available to every victim who does want it.

Victims are not able to decide where they are able to go for medical treatment. In fact, in many rural areas there is only one hospital emergency room, for them to go to. By not having this requirement in place it puts victims at the mercy of what information the hospital decides to make available. We allow, in fact, encourage patients to get second opinions, to seek out additional information from other doctors when serious diagnoses are made. We should not exclude victims of sexual assault from being able to obtain all the information that is available for the possible consequences of a sexual assault. This information must also be available at a crucial time after the assault.

We are seeing a rise in the mergers of secular and religious hospitals throughout the state and country. While respecting the religious beliefs of individuals we are concerned with the possibility

of an institution requiring those beliefs of all its patients. At the time of an assault, women should have the right to go to any emergency hospital room and receive information on all the health issues that may result from the sexual assault. We would not want information withheld from us by our doctors because there is treatment they disagree with. We would insist on receiving all of our options and choices for medical treatment. This legislation is putting victims of sexual assault who go to hospital emergency rooms in to that same category. Not every victim will decide this is the right method for her, but if it is she should have that information available to her.

I wish I could bring you the story of a woman who was denied this information. Unfortunately, many of those women who did not receive that information do not know they were entitled to it. It would require those who later found out to disclose that they had to have an abortion as the result of a sexual assault, that they had a child they did not want, that they had to go through a pregnancy that was a constant reminder of their assault. I can't image having to reveal that.

We ask that you support SB 391. The more information available the better decision a women can make.