



**For Immediate Release**  
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**COALITION SHARES NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION**  
**Urges Legislators to Make *Compassionate Care for Rape Victims* a Priority in 2007**

Madison, WI- Members of the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Coalition (CCRV) are calling on legislators, policy makers and concerned citizens to share their New Year's Resolution to ensure rape victims have access to comprehensive and compassionate care.

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 American Medical Association guidelines require counseling and the provision of emergency contraception (EC) to rape victims, a recent CCRV Coalition study showed that only one-third of Wisconsin hospitals unconditionally provide EC to rape victims.

"As we enter the New Year, we must enter a new era in terms of health care for survivors of rape in our state. Providing rape victims with the comprehensive, quality care they deserve is long overdue," said Alena Swansen, sexual assault victims service coordinator with the Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence Inc. in River Falls. "It's time to treat our rape victims with a higher level of compassion."

EC is a high concentration of birth control pills that prevents pregnancy if taken within 120 hours of an assault. EC is at least 75 percent effective when taken within 72 hours. The sooner taken, the more effective EC is in preventing pregnancy.

Despite the efforts of the CCRV Coalition and incredible public support, state legislative leaders have refused to schedule a public hearing in Madison to discuss legislation requiring Wisconsin hospital emergency rooms to provide information about emergency contraception and, if requested, dispense the medication. In 2007, CCRV Coalition members are committed to making sure the public gets the opportunity to formally discuss this important issue at the state's Capitol.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a brand of EC called Plan B for over-the-counter (OTC) sales to consumers 18 and older earlier this year. But a rape victim is not guaranteed access, especially if she is under 18, her pharmacy does not stock Plan B or a pharmacist decides to deny her the medication.

"Emergency Contraception is one of many critical options that rape victims need to consider. Emergency rooms should not presume that women will have access to EC at the pharmacy. Instead of risking that a victim will be further traumatized by embarking on a search for medication, we must improve access to EC at her first point of contact—the hospital emergency room—by passing the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims legislation," said Carmen Pitre of the Task Force on Family Violence.

*For more information regarding Compassionate Care for Rape Victims, please visit: [www.supportwomenshealth.org](http://www.supportwomenshealth.org).*

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