



For Immediate Release
December 3, 2007

Contact: Sara Finger
(608) 251-0139

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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