



KANSAS NOW

PO Box 1860
Wichita, KS 67201-1860

T 620 245 4904

coordinator@ksnow.org

www.ksnow.org

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To: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
FR: Kari Ann Rinker, State Coordinator
Kansas NOW
RE: SB 91, Proponent Testimony

Kansas NOW submits this testimony in strong support of SB 91.

The current statute KSA 65-4 legislates sexual assault evidence collection protocol. SB91 would amend that statute to require that information about the availability, efficacy, and use of emergency contraception (EC) be included in that protocol. This information would be provided for the purpose and intent of preventing an unwanted pregnancy that might occur as a result of the victim's sexual assault.

The purpose of SB 91 is to provide an additional provision for quality of care for survivors of sexual assault into the evidence collection process and to remove any uncertainty about whether these survivors are informed about the use and availability of EC for pregnancy prevention. This addition to the existing protocol would insure that women are equipped with knowledge about EC, preventing the further trauma and stress that an unwanted pregnancy would bring.

- *Approximately 5% of all rape victims between the ages of 12 and 45 will become pregnant as a result of their attack. The Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported 1,127 rapes in 2009. According to the United States Department of Justice, only 55% of rapes are reported nationally. Using these statistics, we can estimate the actual number of rapes in Kansas to be 2,049. This leads to an estimate of 102 pregnancies in Kansas occurring as the result of sexual assaults. Studies show that half of those pregnancies end in abortion.*
- *According to a 2004 Kaiser Family Foundation Study only 64% of women of reproductive age knew that they could prevent a pregnancy from occurring after sexual intercourse. The study also determined that EC is still rarely mentioned in the clinical setting with only 14% of women ever having discussed emergency contraception with a doctor or nurse.*

EC is most effective if taken within the first 72 hours of an assault, making time of the essence. Significant time has often lapsed before victims present for the sexual assault examination process. This can be due to the influence of drugs such as “roofies” or alcohol consumption, time spent by the victim overcoming possible feelings of stigma, shame or embarrassment from their attack and often lengthy drives to receive hospital examinations from certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE).

- *Requiring that information become a part of the sexual assault evidence collection protocol would help to insure that survivors of sexual assault learn about and get help accessing EC quickly to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.*

Adding information about EC as part of the sexual assault examination process is not a new concept. Currently, 16 states have EC information laws.

- *These states include Arkansas, Colorado, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin and Utah.*

Twelve states require the dispensing of EC to sexual assault survivors in emergency rooms.

- *These states include Ohio, South Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin.*

Kansas NOW is proud to have led the effort in the introduction of and lobbying effort in support of SB 91. Kansas NOW sees SB 91 as part of the ongoing effort to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions in the state of Kansas and to provide women with important information about their health care options.

For Equality and Justice,



Kari Ann Rinker
State Coordinator