



clackamas women's services

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February 6, 2024

Re: Support for training and access to medical forensic care for survivors of sexual assault (HB 4123)

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), we are pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 4123 which appropriates funding to the Department of Justice for training and access to medical forensic care for survivors of sexual assault.

The mission of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's first domestic violence shelter, CWS is a community-based organization providing comprehensive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services to survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, elder and vulnerable adult abuse, human trafficking, exploitation, and stalking.

There is a great need for more Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and Sexual Assault Examiners (SAEs) in Oregon. SANES/SAEs are specially trained to understand the dynamics of sexual assault, the unique healthcare needs of sexual assault victims, and proper collection of forensic evidence that may be used by law enforcement in sexual assault investigations. **Competent and qualified SANES/SAEs are a critical component of healing and justice for many survivors of sexual assault.**

This need is particularly acute in rural areas where survivors face driving hours for an examination, which is not always feasible or possible. Expedited access to care and forensic exams is critical. To preserve evidence a survivor may be asked to refrain from things like taking a shower or eating something, to that end it is imperative that wait times are low and access is readily available.

An ongoing source of funding for the SCC will support outreach to recruit new SANES/SAEs and training that supports them in achieving certification requirements, both of which are crucial to ensuring sexual assault victims receive the care they deserve.

In closing, an ongoing appropriation of \$400k per biennium, will support outreach to recruit new SANES/SAEs and training that supports them in achieving certification requirements, both of which are crucial to ensuring sexual assault victims receive the care they deserve.

For the above reasons, we ask that you support the passage of HB 4123. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melissa Erlbaum
Executive Director