

April 2006

Official Position Statement on **FUNDING FOR NEW JERSEY SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROGRAMS**

BACKGROUND

Since their inception, Sexual Violence Programs in the state of New Jersey have been under-resourced and under-funded. Services for survivors, their loved ones and significant others, have depended on a level of commitment and support from sponsoring organizations that can no longer be sustained. Ever-increasing demands for service, coupled with decreasing funds for direct service have resulted in increasing staff/volunteer turnover and decreasing continuity of care for survivors, their loved ones and significant others.

POSITION

The community-based direct care system is slowly but surely reaching a critical breaking point that threatens the availability of core services in each county. The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) and all of its member Sexual Violence Programs go on record with the following funding imperatives:

1. Core survivor-centered services in each county must include:
 - ❖ 24-hour hotline capability
 - ❖ 24-hour crisis response as a critical member of county Sexual Assault Response Teams
 - ❖ Availability of individual and group counseling for survivors, their loved ones and significant others
2. A commitment that funding of other state mandates (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners [S.A.N.E.] & Victim Information Notification Everyday [V.I.N.E.]) should never be done at the expense of funding available for local Sexual Violence Programs.
3. Any further cuts in state funding for core services may result in the total demise of core services in high risk counties.
4. The current value of core services for each of the 21-county Sexual Violence Programs, at a minimum, for one year is calculated as:

Basic Core Services Per County Program

- ❖ 24-hour Hotline (365 x \$7.12x24) + 15% fringe = \$71,726.88
 - ❖ 1 Full-time Caseworker @ \$45,000 + 25% fringe = \$56,250.00
 - ❖ 1 Half-time Caseworker @ \$25,000 + 15% fringe = \$28,750.00
- Total = \$156,726.88**

Current state funding for core services only for NJCASA member Sexual Violence Programs averages from a low of **\$44,619.00** (Division on Women funding only) to a high of **\$85,463.00** (Division on Women and Violence Against Women Act & Victims of Crime Act funding) and is inadequate to meet future demands. A program match of 200-300% is unrealistic to meet minimum costs which do not include operating expenses or prevention education or community outreach efforts.

5. Congress must support full funding of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) 2005 and protect the current Victims Of Crime Act (VOCA); both are critical in supporting services to survivors of sexual violence.
6. Additional dedicated funding for core services akin to the marriage license fee revenue for domestic violence services must be identified and implemented immediately.



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RATIONALE

For over 30 years, Sexual Violence Programs throughout our state have provided crucial services to survivors, their loved ones and significant others. NJCASA believes that the presence of a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate is essential to an effective and compassionate response to a survivor of sexual violence. As N.J.S.A 2A:84A-22:13 recognizes, the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by survivors, their loved ones and significant others, are often best responded to by trained, Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates. Recent research¹ notes that the immediate crisis intervention and accompaniments provided by trained advocates is critical in promoting the healing process for survivors of sexual violence. The study conducted by Campbell¹ reports that survivors are more likely to report to police, feel less re-traumatization by "systems" and were more likely to receive the necessary legal and medical services they deserve. New Jersey cannot afford to re-victimize this already vulnerable population.

¹Campbell, Rebecca. *Rape Survivors' Experiences with the Legal and Medical Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference?* Violence Against Women, Vol. 12: Sage Publications; p.30-45, 2006.