

Fact Sheet: Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA)

The Survivors' Access to Supportive Care (SASCA) Act would:

Strengthen the sexual assault examiner workforce by evaluating state-level needs. On the basis of literature reviewed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), as well as interviews with experts and state officials, data on the number of examiners nationwide and in selected states are limited or unavailable. SASCA will authorize \$2 million per year for state-level surveys to better understand barriers to accessing sexual assault care and services, the availability of sexual assault examiners, the costs of training, the spectrum of state-training requirements and standards, and the status of funding at the state level for sexual assault examinations.

Develop and test national standards of care for survivors of sexual assault. Currently, no federal programs exist for the sole purpose of expanding access to health care for survivors of sexual assault, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) does not oversee any national standard or certification protocol for sexual assault examiners. SASCA starts to address both of these by directing HHS to establish a pilot training and continuing education program, to be tested and incorporated by health care providers nationwide, including in rural areas where access to sexual assault examinations is limited due to provider and hospital shortages.

Increase understanding of and access to sexual assault care nationwide. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013 identified gender-based violence and sexual assault as ongoing threats to women, children, and families. SASCA will establish a pilot grant program to expand medical forensic exam training and services to new providers as well as to expand access in rural areas. SASCA will also establish a national sexual assault taskforce of government agencies and key stakeholders to better understand sexual assault and address the gaps in care for survivors.

Expand access to SAFE/SANE services. SASCA requires that hospitals provide information about their capacity to provide sexual assault care and services to survivors, and calls for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and individuals states to establish and keep an updated online maps of where survivors can access SAFE/SANE Services. Additionally, SASCA will:

- **Increase access for rural and tribal communities.** SASCA provides training grants to entities that serve rural and tribal communities, with 15% of the funding allocated for these grants set aside for Indian-affiliated organizations. SASCA also calls for the development of tools and best practices that will address the unique features and cultural sensitivities within these communities.
- **Increase access for students.** SASCA will require that institutions of higher education make students aware of SAFE/SANE services on campus, including by providing information on the nearest hospital with SAFE/SANE services for student as well as information on transportation costs.

Create a new resource center to provide technical assistance to states and hospitals in providing care to survivors. SASCA will create a new resource center, available to any hospital receiving federal funds, which aims to support access to sexual assault forensic examinations and encourage training. In addition, the center will facilitate interstate learning collectives to help share and learn best practices.

SASCA is supported by: the International Association of Forensic Nurses, the Washington State Hospital Association, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Joyful Heart Foundation, End Rape on Campus, End Violence Against Women International, RAINN, and the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

For more information, please contact Laurel Sakai (laurel_sakai@HELP.senate.gov) or Anna Dietderich (anna_dietderich@murkowski.senate.gov)