FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Members Ascend Capitol For “Legislative Advocacy Day”

Madison, WI March 31, 2011 – This Thursday, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month approaches, Advocates, allies, and staff from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) and Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) will ascend to the Capitol in Madison to meet with their legislators to raise critical issues related to the provision of services to Wisconsin residents.

“We were already facing uphill challenges before the announcement of Governor Walker’s proposed budget,” remarked Jeanie Kurka Reimer, Executive Director at WCASA. “Now we find that the Executive Budget Bill includes substantial cuts to Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) grant program; these funds are central to services that our members provide to victims of sexual violence – and this is at a time when demand for such services is rising.”

Sexual Assault Service Provider (SASP) data from 2010 reveals that many have experienced increases of over 100 percent in the number of victims seeking services. The current budget bill cuts the SAVS contribution down to $1,815,100 per year, $1,782,000 of which is dispersed to local service providers. This is a substantial decrease from the nearly $2,069,500 provided to agencies last year.

“The budget is unquestionably the focal point of the day for us; in addition, we will be looking to engage legislators around a host of other critical issues pertinent to our 2011-2012 Legislative Agenda.”

The agency has identified key areas to focus legislative efforts over the next session. These include: crime victim rights, enhancing prosecutions, increasing victims’ access to civil justice system, and increasing sexual assault prevention efforts. For more information, visit WCASA’s State Legislation page at: http://www.wcasa.org/pages/Policy-State.php, or WCADV’s Legislative Agenda page at: http://www.wcadv.org/2011-2012-legislative-agenda.

###