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PRESS RELEASE

Time for Action:

Recommended Solutions to Sexual Assault Victim Services Funding Crisis

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Madison – Over the past two weeks at least two dozen press articles have been written about the funding challenge faced by the Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) program. Due to declining surcharge revenue and budget cuts local sexual assault service providers have been told they face SAVS grant cuts of 42.5 percent in 2012.

What's more, instead of receiving 80 percent of the grant level at the beginning of the year, programs were told they would only receive 25 percent at the beginning of the year with the hope that the additional funds would be available throughout the year.

As of today, a bipartisan group of nearly half of Wisconsin's State Legislators have signed on to letters to the Attorney General urging him to find a way to fully fund the program in the short term, and have indicated their support for finding a long-term solution.

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and its member sexual assault service providers want to thank those legislators and the many Wisconsin residents who have spoken out in support of these critical services over the past few weeks. This broad and passionate support suggests it is time to find a solution to this problem. Time is running short.

We recommend the following actions take place to shore up SAVS:

1. The Department of Justice use its discretionary funds, recently realized additional federal Victim of Crime Act funds, or some other option as a temporary fix to ensure grant levels remain at the roughly \$2 million level (total statewide) until the end of the current state budget period.
2. A general purpose revenue commitment of approximately \$1.5 million per year to supplement the dwindling surcharge revenue coming into the program be made in the 2013-2015 state budget. Planning for that budget is to begin this spring with state agencies planning their budget requests that are then submitted to the Department of Administration by next September.

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