Wisconsin Needs Stronger Investment in Sexual Assault Services, Prevention and Prosecution


“When survivors choose to report their sexual assault to law enforcement, trained sexual assault advocates and prosecutors frequently work hand-in-hand to the benefit of survivors and the community as a whole,” stated Meyers.

“Advocates provide survivors critical support and guidance through the complex criminal justice system,” stated Meyers. “This increases the ability of the system to hold perpetrators accountable and make our communities safer. In addition to leading to higher prosecution rates, sexual assault advocacy helps reduce long-term costs to the community.”

WCASA has been meeting with state lawmakers in recent weeks, advocating for increased funding for the Sexual Assault Victim Services Grant Program (SAVS) to $4 million annually, funded from the state’s General Purpose Revenue. SAVS is the only state program that funds sexual assault services and prevention, and currently receives $2 million annually.

In addition, WCASA continues to support full funding of pay progression for assistant district attorneys, to stem the loss of experienced prosecutors. Experienced prosecutors have greater success holding perpetrators accountable, thus making our communities safer, and increasing the ability of the criminal justice system to provide a sense of justice to survivors.

“WCASA appreciates that in 2013 the governor and legislature stabilized funding for sexual assault services and made pay progression for assistant district attorneys state law,” said Meyers.

“But sexual assault service providers continue to operate on shoestring budgets with state funding of sexual assault services at 2009 levels,” stated Meyers. “What’s more, previous fluctuations in state funding have had a lasting effect on service providers’ ability to ensure access to services and prevention initiatives.”

“We welcome the opportunity to work with the governor and legislature to expand sexual assault services, prevention, and prosecution to help survivors thrive and to end sexual violence in our state,” stated Meyers.
The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA, www.wcasa.org) is a membership agency comprised of organizations and individuals working to end sexual violence in Wisconsin. Among these are the 50 sexual assault service provider agencies throughout the state that offer support, advocacy and information to survivors of sexual assault and their families. WCASA works to ensure that every survivor in Wisconsin gets the support and care they need. WCASA also works to create the social change necessary to ensure a future where no child, woman or man is ever sexually violated again.