



ForensicNurses.org

p 410 626 7805
f 410 626 7804

Congressional Grassroots Action Alert Please Take Action Now!

IAFN Supports the Survivor's Access to Supportive Care Act

Position

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) maintains that the federal government must assist in ensuring victims of sexual assault and domestic violence have access to essential services when an assault has been committed. IAFN calls upon Congress to enact the **Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA)** (S.402/H.R.1082) to ensure these services are available within the community. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in the Senate introduced S.402 on February 7, 2019. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Rep. Peter King (R-NY) introduced H.R.1082 in the House on the same day.

SASCA will do the following: 1) strengthen the sexual assault examiner workforce by evaluating state-level needs, 2) test national standards of care for victims of sexual assault, 3) increase understanding of and access to sexual assault care nationwide, 4) increase understanding of and access to sexual assault care nationwide, 5) increase access to SAFE/SANE services for students, and 6) create a new resource center to provide technical assistance to states and hospitals in providing care to survivors.

Background

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 provide for state-level surveys to better understand 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.

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 for sexual assault examiners. SASCA will address this need by directing HHS to establish a national training and continuing education program, to be tested and incorporated by health care providers

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 like physician assistants, as well as to Federally Qualified Health Centers and Title X funded clinics 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 needs of victims. This taskforce will additionally provide a best- practices guide to treating survivors of sexual assault.

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.

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.

For more information or to cosponsor this legislation please contact Laurel Sakai in Senator Patty Murray's office at laurel_sakai@help.senate.gov or Anna Dietderich in Senator Lisa Murkowski's office at Anna_Dietderich@murkowski.senate.gov. Please contact IAFN's Federal Representative, Patrick Cooney, at Patrick@federalgrp.com or 202-413-2629 (m) with any questions you might have regarding this issue.

Step-by-Step Guide to Emailing or Calling Your Representative

Step 1: Identify Your Representative

Please go to <http://house.gov/representatives/find/> to find your representative and <https://www.senate.gov> for your Senator. At the top of the page you will see a box asks you to enter your ZIP code. Type it in the box, then click the red box below. It will take you to a page identifying your congressional district and your Representative or Senator. Underneath their name highlighted in blue on the left side of the page, click the small icon of an envelope. This will take you to that individual member's website contact page. From here, you can email your Member to express your views in support of S.402/H.R1082. This page will also provide you with the phone number for your Member's Washington, D.C. office.

Step 2: Emailing Your Representative

Now that you are ready to email your Representative, we need to craft an advocacy message. Effective advocacy messages to elected officials need to be concise and direct. Below you will find a sample grassroots advocacy email that you can use if you choose to. Feel free to craft your own message relaying your personal feelings on the importance of SASCA being passed.

Sample Grassroots Email Message:

My name is Jane Doe and I am a forensic nurse living in [City, State]. I work at [input name of facility]. I am writing to ask you to actively support passage of S.402/H.R.1082.

As a forensic nurse I am specially trained to care for those who suffer from violence, abuse, or neglect. Victims of violence and abuse require care from a health professional who knows how best to treat the trauma associated with what has been done to them—be it sexual assault, interpersonal violence, neglect, or other forms of intentional injury. As a forensic nurse I am also a critical member of the sexual assault response team. I collect evidence and can give testimony that can be used in a court of law. By hiring and training Forensic Nurses, communities supply themselves with a vital link to the administration of care and justice.

I support the Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA), S.402/H.R.1082. The legislation will strengthen the sexual assault examiner workforce as well as test national standards of care for victims of sexual assault. I support the legislation's step towards increased understanding of and access to sexual assault care nationwide and increased access to SAFE/SANE services for students. Lastly, SASCA will create a new resource center to provide technical assistance to states and hospitals in providing care to survivors, supporting forensic nurses like myself as well as survivors of sexual assault.

Sincerely.

Jane Doe
Forensic Nurse

Step 3: Calling Your Representative

As mentioned in Step 1, when you find your Representative you will see their Washington, D.C. office phone number. If you would rather make a quick phone call to your Representative than send emails, please consider using the following guide.

Step 1: Ask to speak with the Legislative Assistant (LA) handling women's issues and indicate that you want to discuss the Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act (SASCA) S.402/H.R.1082.

Step 2: The LA may not be available to speak, so feel free to leave a brief message indicating you are a forensic nurse treating victims of sexual violence and that you want to discuss SASCA. Leave your number and ask for a return call.

Step 3: Use the sample grassroots message above but put it into your own words so that it will not sound scripted when you are talking to the LA.

Step 4: Offer to be a resource to the staff person if he/she has any questions about SASCA and its impact on women. You can also put them in contact with IAFN's lobbyist, Patrick Cooney, if they have more questions. His email is patrick@federalgrp.com.

Step 5: Thank the staff person for their time. They receive thousands of calls from constituents so always be patient with them.

Step 4: Congratulate yourself for taking action! Thank you on behalf of IAFN.