

Governor signs sexual assault victims'™ fund bill

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Sexual Assault Victims'™ Emergency Medical Response (SAVE) Fund is reauthorized by passage of HB 2128

Attorney General Hardy Myers announced this week that Oregon's Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Medical Response (SAVE) Fund was reauthorized by Governor Ted Kulongoski signing House Bill 2128 into law.

House Bill 2128, sponsored by Myers on behalf of the Department of Justice (DOJ), administers services to crime victims, including victims of sexual assault. The bill allows the SAVE Fund to continue by removing what is commonly referred to as a "sunset clause" from the law. The SAVE Fund was originally established by the Oregon Legislature in 2003 as a temporary program scheduled to end on January 1, 2008. House Bill 2128 removes this provision.

"By approving House Bill 2128, the Legislature and Governor of this state have declared their commitment to ensuring that emergency medical services continue to be available to victims of sexual assault," stated Myers.

"The decisions immediately facing a victim of sexual assault are numerous and require urgency. The SAVE Fund removes the often-asked question of how a victim will afford medical care during this traumatic and difficult time," added Myers.

In addition to covering the costs of emergency medical care, the SAVE Fund covers the cost of forensic exams which are often necessary in order to successfully prosecute the crime. The fund does not receive taxpayer dollars; it is funded entirely through private grants and donations. In its three years of operation, the SAVE Fund has provided medical services for 1,393 victims, 65% who reported having no health insurance. Over 1,000 forensic exams were covered.

To date, DOJ and victims'™ advocates have been responsible for soliciting private donations to the SAVE Fund. Earlier this year, DOJ began accepting online SAVE Fund donations of over \$10 at www.doj.state.or.us/crimev/save_donate.shtml. Donors can remain anonymous or have the option of being recognized on the web site. Donations can also be made on behalf of another person.

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