

H.25

An act relating to sexual assault survivors' rights

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 3281 is added to read:

§ 3281. SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS' RIGHTS

(a) Short Title. This section may be cited as the "Bill of Rights for Sexual Assault Survivors."

(b) Definition. As used in this section, "sexual assault survivor" means a person who is a victim of an alleged sexual offense.

(c) Survivors' Rights. When a sexual assault survivor makes a verbal or written report to a law enforcement officer, emergency department, or sexual assault nurse examiner, or victim's advocate of an alleged sexual offense, the recipient of the report shall provide written notification to the survivor that he or she has the following rights:

(1) The right to receive a medical forensic examination and any related toxicology testing at no cost to the survivor in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 1407, irrespective of whether the survivor reports to or cooperates with law enforcement. If the survivor opts to have a medical forensic examination, he or she shall have the following additional rights:

(A) The right to have the medical forensic examination kit or its probative contents delivered to a forensics laboratory within 72 hours of collection.

(B) The right to have the sexual assault evidence collection kit or its probative contents preserved without charge for the duration of the maximum applicable statute of limitations.

(C) The right to be informed in writing of all policies governing the collection, storage, preservation, and disposal of a sexual assault evidence collection kit.

(D) The right to be informed of a DNA profile match on a reported or confidential kit, on a toxicology report, or on a medical record documenting a medical forensic examination, if the disclosure would not impede or compromise an ongoing investigation.

(E) Upon written request from the survivor, the right to:

(i) receive written notification from the appropriate official with custody not later than 60 days before the date of the kit's intended destruction or disposal; and

(ii) be granted further preservation of the kit or its probative contents.

(2) The right to consult with a sexual assault advocate.

(3) The right to information concerning the availability of protective orders and policies related to the enforcement of protection orders.

(4) The right to information about the availability of, and eligibility for, victim compensation and restitution.

(5) The right to information about confidentiality.

(d) Notification protocols. The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, in consultation with other parties referred to in this section, shall develop protocols and written materials to assist all responsible entities in providing notification to victims.

Sec. 2. 32 V.S.A. § 1407 is amended to read:

§ 1407. COSTS TO BE BORNE BY THE STATE

(a) As described in this section, the State shall cover the costs of certain medical care for victims of crime committed in this State without health insurance or whose health insurance does not pay for all of the care provided, or who request coverage because of concern that his or her safety or confidentiality would be adversely affected if the insurer were billed.

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Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.