

# FAQ REGARDING FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMS

## for Lake Forest College Sexual Violence Survivors

### **Q: SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION AFTER AN INCIDENT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE?**

**A:** It is advisable that you seek medical attention as soon as possible after an incident of sexual violence for STI exposure, pregnancy risk assessment and/or to collect medical evidence to assist in criminal prosecution if applicable. The sooner medical evidence is collected, the more reliable the evidence will be in the event that you decide to report the incident to the police. To best preserve medical evidence, consider not bathing, douching, changing your clothes, eating, brushing your teeth or going to the bathroom until after you have gone to the hospital.

### **Q: WHERE SHOULD I GO FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT?**

**A:** Highland Park Hospital Emergency Room, 777 Park Ave West, Highland Park, IL 60035; 847-432-8000, employs specially trained SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurses to administer medical assistance and collect potentially critical physical evidence. If you call 911 from campus, you will likely be taken to Lake Forest Hospital's emergency room. Although Lake Forest Hospital does not employ SANE nurses, the nurses and doctors are trained to administer medical assistance and collect physical evidence.

### **Q: HOW CAN I GET TO HIGHLAND PARK HOSPITAL?**

**A:** If you are on-campus, you may contact Public Safety to transport you to the hospital. If you take a cab, you may apply for a cab voucher or refund through the Title IX Coordinator.

### **Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GET TO THE HOSPITAL?**

**A:** Your nurse will contact the Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center's Medical Advocacy Hotline to request an advocate be sent to the hospital. The Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center's Medical Advocacy program is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at every hospital in Lake County. The program provides trained volunteers to offer emotional support, appropriate referrals and information regarding relevant hospital and law enforcement protocols. In addition to calling the Medical Advocate, your nurse will ask your permission to conduct a physical exam and collect evidence using the Illinois State Police Evidence Collection Kit (also referred to as a "rape kit").

### **Q: WHAT IF I DECIDE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL A FEW DAYS AFTER THE INCIDENT?**

**A:** If you have not yet washed your clothes, sheets or anything else that may contain evidence of the assault, place them in a paper or other non-plastic bag and take them with you to the hospital. They may still contain detectable evidence.

### **Q: HOW MUCH WILL THE HOSPITAL EXAM COST?**

**A:** Under Illinois law, the cost of an emergency medical or forensic examination for a sexual violence survivor that is not covered by private insurance or Illinois Public Aid will be covered by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and should not be billed to the patient. Therefore, you will not have to pay out-of-pocket for the exam.

### **Q: WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE EXAM?**

**A:** Evidence collection includes: an internal physical exam; the taking of samples of substances from the vagina or penis, rectum, and mouth; combings of head and pubic hair; and collecting material from beneath your fingernails. These samples will be used to attempt to detect the perpetrator's DNA. Photographs may be taken of bruises, cuts and other injuries that occurred during the incident. Any clothing worn at the time of the incident may also be collected and processed for DNA. You should not expect to get clothing, photos or any other items submitted to the examining nurse or law enforcement back.

### **Q: WILL THE POLICE BE CALLED?**

**A:** All Illinois emergency rooms are required to contact the local police when a patient seeks treatment for injuries that may be related to sexual violence. However, you are not required to speak with the responding officer or you may do so when you are ready. Consenting to the rape kit exam will not require you to file a formal report with local law enforcement or the College.

### **Q: WHERE DOES THE EVIDENCE GO WHEN THE EXAM IS OVER?**

**A:** Once the exam is complete, the nurse will ask for your written consent to release the rape kit to law enforcement so that it may be processed in the crime lab. If you do not consent to release the rape kit to law enforcement, the hospital will retain the rape kit for two weeks. You may contact the hospital at any time during those two weeks to consent to the rape kit's release to law enforcement. If you do not consent to release the rape kit to law enforcement during that two weeks, the rape kit will be destroyed by the hospital. A rape kit may not be released by an Illinois hospital without written consent from the survivor.

### **Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO TALK TO THE POLICE?**

**A:** The police will speak with you at the hospital and will likely follow up with a detailed interview at the station on a later date. The Police will then speak with all other relevant witnesses and the accused. Once a detailed investigation is conducted, the Police will submit the investigation to the Lake County State's Attorney's Office to determine whether the case can be prosecuted.

### **Q: WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

**A:** You can obtain more information from the College's Title IX Coordinator, Julie Yura, [yura@lakeforest.edu](mailto:yura@lakeforest.edu); 847-735-6009, or from any of the following agencies:

- Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center, [zcenter.org](http://zcenter.org)
- Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, [icasa.org](http://icasa.org)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline, 800-656-HOPE (4673)
- A Safe Place, [safeforceforhelp.org](http://safeforceforhelp.org)
- Lake County State's Attorney, [lcsao.org](http://lcsao.org)
- Lake Forest Police Department, 847-234-2601, [DumontW@cityoflakeforest.com](mailto:DumontW@cityoflakeforest.com)

