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5510 Research Park Drive
P.O. Box 259038
Madison, WI 53725-9038
608.274.1820 | FAX 608.274.8554 | www.wha.org

TO: Member of the Assembly Committee on Health

FROM: Kyle O'Brien - Senior Vice President Government Relations
Ann Zenk, RN, BSN, MHA - Vice President Workforce & Clinical Practice

DATE: February 5, 2020

RE: Wisconsin Hospital Association Opposition to Provisions in Assembly Bill 844

Wisconsin's hospital and emergency department staff are critical and caring frontline providers for victims of sexual assault. This responsibility, and the impact of new public policy changing this responsibility, is best understood by those who have cared for victims. With that feedback and counsel from our members, the Wisconsin Hospital Association expresses concerns with provisions of Assembly Bill 844 creating new statutory obligations for health care providers to inform patients about processes that are best known by law enforcement and victim/witness advocates within the criminal justice system, not health care providers.

Wisconsin hospitals, providers and staff work side-by-side with law enforcement, crime victim services and victim advocacy organizations to ensure patients are protected and perpetrators are prosecuted. Unfortunately, the new mandates in Assembly Bill 844 take a different approach by siloing responsibilities for informing victims of sexual assault and creating more government regulations, instead of encouraging collaboration between hospitals and important victim/witness partners in the law enforcement community.

These provisions of AB 844 incorrectly assign responsibilities to health care. We ask the Committee to reject these new statutory mandates placed upon hospitals and defer this notification responsibility to experts within law enforcement and crime victim services who are trained for this purpose.