



# Hospital of Saint Raphael

A member of the Saint Raphael Healthcare System

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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
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**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**March 13, 2007**

**RE: SENATE BILL 1343, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPASSIONATE CARE  
FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

The Hospital of Saint Raphael's mission is caring. We are called upon to provide compassionate and high-quality healthcare services to all patients who seek our care. All patients, including victims of sexual assault, are treated with dignity and respect, and although the first priority is to respond to the physical and acute clinical needs of the patient, we also respond to the mental health and spiritual needs of all of our patients.

When a patient arrives at the hospital following a sexual assault, Saint Raphael's staff first focuses on caring for the physical and emotional needs associated with this trauma. A sexual assault kit is used to gather evidence, and patients are offered supportive help from Saint Raphael's social services department. If the patient agrees, the Rape Crisis Center is contacted on the patient's behalf for additional assistance.

The Hospital of Saint Raphael follows the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, including directive #1 to provide healthcare to those in need. Using these same directives, Saint Raphael's clinical staff administers emergency contraception to prevent ovulation in a woman who has been raped if, after immediate testing, it can be determined that she is not pregnant or not ovulating. Statistics regarding sexual assault victims cared for at Saint Raphael's are summarized below:

January 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006

Rape victims cared for in the emergency department:	11
Of those:	
Patients who desired and received emergency contraception:	5
Patients who were post-menopausal, on birth-control pills, or refused treatment:	6

Of the 11 patients cared for, 5 were also assisted by an outside rape crisis counselor. All patients, including victims of sexual assault, are provided with factual, clinical information regarding the methods and effectiveness of treatment options, to assist the

patient in making decisions regarding treatment. If emergency contraception cannot be administered at Saint Raphael's and the patient wishes to receive this medication, referrals are made to a community physician or to an appropriate agency by our emergency department clinical staff. Over-the-counter emergency contraception is also available to patients 18 years of age and older.

The above statistics and the policies and procedures that we have in place to assist all victims of sexual assault raise the question as to the need for S.B. 1343, An Act Concerning Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. We already provide compassionate care to all patients, including victims of sexual assault, and have the appropriate protocols and mechanisms in place to do so.

Saint Raphael's outreach efforts and programs in our community to help the underserved, the poor, and the elderly demonstrate our commitment to help all patients in need. We are privileged to care for thousands of patients in the Greater New Haven community each year and look forward to continuing to meet those needs today and in the years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.