



United States Senate

April 3, 2020

Laura Rogers, Director
Office on Violence Against Women
U.S. Department of Justice
800 K Street, N.W., Suite 920
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Director Rogers:

I am writing to request information on steps you are taking to protect sexual assault survivors during the coronavirus pandemic. I urge you to do as much as possible.

The Office on Violence Against Women administers the Sexual Assault Services Program, which is the federal government's only funding source dedicated to sexual assault services and rape crisis centers. It is critical this program quickly and effectively serves the needs of sexual assault survivors during this pandemic.

Based on a 2019 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, before the onset of the coronavirus, 84 percent of rape crisis programs reported an increased demand for services. Half had a waiting list for counseling services. These programs are now under additional demands as they follow guidance to prevent further spread of the coronavirus.

For example, due to required social distancing, programs are struggling to rapidly convert their services and operations from in-person to virtual. They are doing this while trying to ensure survivors' confidentiality. Similarly, survivors' access to follow-up medical care is often uncertain due to crowded hospitals and other medical facilities. In the midst of this crisis, programs are also still attempting to meet the basic needs of survivors, including food, emergency financial assistance, and child-care support.



United States Senate

As I work with my colleagues to ensure Congress meets the needs of sexual assault survivors, please provide information on how your office is addressing this pandemic. In particular, please provide any guidance you are giving to direct service providers regarding virtual services and survivors' medical needs. Please also provide any specific information on how you are otherwise using the Sexual Assault Services Program to help survivors during to this crisis and specific steps that Congress could take to ensure that the needs of this vulnerable population are being met during this public health crisis.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein".

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator