

## ***ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER***

**July 2003**

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### **GREETINGS!**

**ON-CALL CALENDAR:** The summer calendar needs help. Please, if you are in town, consider putting yourself on call several times during July and August. These two months tend to be high statistical months for sexual assault especially. Thanks.

**MAY STATISTICS:** In May, Advocates were called into the ED **25 times** for sexual assault and domestic violence cases. SAFE examiners provided **13** sexual assault exams. From June 1 to June 20, advocates were called into the ED **19 times!!** During this period SAFE examiners were called into the ED **12 times!!**

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION UPDATE/GOOD NEWS!!!** On June 10th, a few of us “diehards” went up to Albany to do some last minute advocacy for sexual assault, domestic violence and crime victim legislation before the legislature adjourned for the summer. Well true to form, one can never predict what will happen in that strange planet. One minute our bills are alive, the next they died and then in a blink, we were able to get some legislation passed!! ...and we are thrilled!! We thank the NYS Legislature for their vision and support. They are:

- **Credit and Financial Counseling:** NYS Crime Victims Board is authorized to pay for financial counseling for disabled and elder victims of telemarketing and credit card fraud, identity theft and scams.
- **Emergency Contraception for Rape Survivors:** All NYS emergency departments must provide the option of emergency contraception, information and medication as part of the standard of care provided to victims of sexual assault..
- **SARA “Clean Up”:** In 2000, the **Sexual Assault Reform Act** was passed and signed into law by Gov. Pataki. It was one of the most progressive and comprehensive pieces of legislation on sexual assault in the U.S. However parts of the bill were NOT FINISHED! Several areas needed refinement and change of language. For years, crime victim advocates have been asking for gender-neutral nomenclature change in the NYS penal code for rape and the deletion of the word “sodomy” and term “deviate sexual intercourse” from state law. These terms are not only archaic, but they are biased, demeaning, and insulting. Sodomy in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree will now be renamed “Criminal Sexual Act”. “Oral Sexual Conduct” or “Anal Sexual Conduct” replaces “Deviate Sexual Intercourse” in the law. The sentences for these offenses remain the same.
- **Forensic Payment Act:** This act will allow the NYS Crime Victims Board financially compensate hospitals for treatment of sexual assault in the ED for medical care and forensic evidence collection by a certified sexual assault forensic examiner in the amount of \$800 per exam. This bill will be effective in 2005. This bill is a precedent in that CVB is NOT the payer of last resort but first resort and allows the hospital to be the claimant for providing the services. The benefit in this bill is that by allowing the hospital to bill CVB, the survivor does not have to initiate a claim and affidavit and will not be billed or harassed for payment of medical services.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT TRAINING VIDEO:** Yes, we started working on the training video with Kimberly and Sara, our cracker jack Columbia film students. We will be calling advocates to interview so if you are interested, call us too. We plan to film in the ED and tape an examination from beginning to end, profile the advocates and SAFE examiners. We are all very excited about this and hope that the editing will be completed for our next advocate training in October. After that...we would like to do something on domestic violence.

**WORKSHOP FOR ADVOCATES:** We have received a wonderful offer from artist in residence, Melissa A. Chapin to teach a workshop for Advocates in **Photo Manipulation** during July and August. This innovative technique allows those of us who are not artists to take photos and turn them into works of art using image transfer and emulsion lift in addition to familiar techniques such as painting, leafing, stamping, etc. Melissa is a professional artist and is attending NYU for art therapy. Melissa has provided "Respite" workshops for victims of primary and secondary trauma, volunteers and staff who work with trauma in Vermont when she was working with Victim Services.

This will be a great opportunity for a group of us to get together and share in a creative project that we can then take away with us and expand upon. Melissa stresses that no previous experience is needed and beginners are most welcome to participate. Please call Sally if you are interested. We'll fill you in on the details later. Who knows? We may be inviting everyone to a showing in the Fall...

**ADVOCATE UP-TRAINING:** There WILL be up-training this month- on Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup> from 6-8PM- location and guest speaker to be announced...

**ADVOCATE NEWS:** Rape Crisis Advocate, **Grace Lo**, is no longer able to advocate with CVTC but she's carrying on the work to her new job as DV Counselor at the New York Asian Women's Center in Brooklyn... Rape Crisis Advocate, **Ilona Lewyckyj**, is in Kyiv, Ukraine helping to develop rape crisis programming as part of their trafficking prevention project. She is working through Winrock International, an NGO that works for women's empowerment and leadership in countries all around the world. Ilona is working on the Trafficking Prevention Program, developing a training for trainers on rape crisis counseling. She will be back in August and we'll get an update... Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Advocate, **Katherine Gibson**, is moving to San Diego to start a Doctor of Psychology program in Clinical Psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology.

### Thought for the Month

The staff of CVTC applauds the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions made during the week of June 23, 2003.

Justice prevails!