

# Emergency Contraception Options for Victims/Survivors of Rape, Incest, or any Sexual Assault

*The mission of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is to work to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault.* 

## Position:

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape believes that victims have the right to be informed of and have access to all medical options, including those that minimize the risk of pregnancy as a result of sexual assault, rape, or incest. The option of emergency contraception must be addressed with each patient that is at risk for pregnancy. The personal beliefs of a health care provider should not interfere with the client's right to self-determination.

Health care providers must make known all the options available to a victim of sexual assault, rape, or incest. It is the advocate's role to ensure that pregnancy prophylaxis is discussed and made available for the victim.

## Rationale:

Health care providers impart information concerning sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS treatment, information concerning the rape exam kit and evidence collection, or information concerning any other medical treatments deemed necessary for the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of a client. The victim is also entitled to information about and the option of pregnancy prophylaxis.

All victims/survivors have the right to complete information regarding medical and treatment options available. Only the victim/survivor has the right to decide whether or not to choose emergency contraception. The ability to make choices concerning her own body is critical to begin the journey of the healing process for a victim of sexual violence.



## Background:

Sexual assault is a devastating experience with life-long effects for the victims/survivors. Along with the emotional impact is the concern of pregnancy. Emergency contraception is known to reduce the risk of pregnancy following sexual assault.

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape may issue statements regarding public policy affecting sexual violence victims and rape crisis centers. All position statements adopted by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape will be viewed as the official position statement, the center, when publicly or privately voicing opposition to the statement, will do so in the capacity of an independent program and in no way as a member of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.



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