

New law expands care for rape victims

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(HealthDay)—Expanded care for sexual assault victims is a main feature of the Violence Against Women Act that was signed into [law](#) Tuesday by President Joe Biden.

Along with providing greater access to rape testing kits, the legislation seeks to develop national standards of care for [victims of sexual assault](#) and also includes measures to better study the issue and create a federal grant program to help hospitals train specialized nurses called [sexual assault](#) nurse examiners.

The legislation was drafted by Washington Senator Patty Murray (D) after she learned that a constituent in Seattle was unable to receive a rape examination at her neighborhood hospital in 2014.

"When Leah [Griffin] bravely shared her [story](#) with me back in 2014, I was furious that she and too many other [survivors](#) were getting turned away from a hospital after a sexual assault and being told 'not here' or 'try somewhere else,' when they tried to get care," Murray said in a [statement](#). "Since then, we've been working the phones, building support and reaching across the aisle to make progress on this. I have never given up—because survivors like Leah deserve to be heard, to heal, and to get the care they need to seek justice."

"When I was denied access to a sexual assault exam at a hospital in 2014, Senator Murray heard my story, and committed to helping... No survivor should be turned away when seeking care," Griffin said in the same statement.

"My goal is that every [hospital](#) in this country, urban, rural, anywhere, will have someone who is trained as a 'SANE' nurse to be able to help a victim of sexual assault, be able to process the evidence that they need," Murray told *CBS News*.

A 2016 Government Accountability Office report requested by Murray revealed a lack of information about the issue and insufficient resources.

"I was stunned at how many hospitals and [health care providers](#) did not

have someone trained to be able to do this work," Murray told *CBS News*. "Since I've been working on this, I've had so many people come up to me on the street and say, 'I just had this happen to me.'"

The [legislation](#) was co-sponsored by Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski (R), who pointed out that [sexual assault](#) victims in rural parts of her state have to take a flight to receive the necessary care.

More information: Visit the U.S. Department of Justice for more on [violence against women](#).

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