

## HOSPITAL/MEDICAL ADVOCACY

<b>Definition</b>	Acting in short-term support of and partnership with survivors and co-survivors as they navigate the medical/healthcare system; providing the survivor with appropriate, accessible information and resources to make informed decisions about their healthcare needs; and assisting them in obtaining the care they desire
<b>Goal</b>	To ensure the survivor and co-survivor(s) has the support they need while receiving medical care, treatment, and/or forensic evidence collection, as desired
<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing the survivor and co-survivor(s) with accurate information about the physical impact of sexual violence and about the resources and options available to the survivor to address various healthcare needs</li> <li>• Addressing and supporting the survivor's healthcare needs, regardless of the decision to collect or not collect evidence</li> <li>• Accompanying the survivor, if desired, to a local emergency department or healthcare facility for a medical forensic examination</li> <li>• Virtually accompanying the survivor via tele-advocacy methods and, if desired, while they are receiving a medical forensic examination</li> <li>• Providing service planning and resources for follow-up care related to healthcare needs as the survivor recovers</li> <li>• Providing, or collaborating with medical staff to provide, safety planning options upon discharge</li> <li>• Providing the survivor information about the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Reimbursement Program from the Attorney General's Office, the Crime Victim Compensation Program, the Ohio Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic and Medical Exams, and the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking (SAKT) System</li> <li>• Collaborating with medical staff to ensure that all care is provided in an accessible way</li> <li>• Not diagnosing medical conditions or recommending treatment regimens for survivors and co-survivors, even if the Qualified Advocate is licensed to do so</li> <li>• Accessible to all survivors, including those with limited English proficiency and the Deaf and hard of hearing</li> </ul>

**Minimum  
Qualifications,  
Continued**

- Compliant with the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and access to services is provided through telephone interpretation or video relay
- Advocates collaborate with hospital/medical professionals to obtain interpreters and provide all care according to the ADA

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## ***Program Checklist***

### 1. Staffing

Qualified Advocates providing hospital/medical advocacy:

- Receive at least 40 hours of rape crisis training, and 30 hours of continuing education every two years thereafter, and are supervised by a coordinator or staff member who has at least one year of experience working with survivors of sexual assault
- Shadow experienced Qualified Advocates before going alone to a hospital accompaniment or providing tele-advocacy services
- Have immediate access to their supervisor or another experienced Qualified Advocate who is available for any support needed following a hospital visit or tele-advocacy call

### 2. Policies

The Program:

- Provides hospital/medical advocacy on a 24-hour basis at no cost to survivors
- Has a protocol for responding to requests for hospital/medical advocacy services, including through the crisis line
- Has a protocol with local hospitals which specifies when and how to contact the Program and the role of Qualified Advocates responding to a call, including tele-advocacy services
- Forbids advocates from dispensing medical advice or diagnoses, even if the advocate is licensed to do so
- Forbids advocates from dispensing unsolicited personal opinions about medical care, or coercing survivors into any medical treatment or protocol
- Establishes a protocol around documenting services provided
- May refuse to provide hospital/medical advocacy services to people who are harassing program staff and volunteers, and offers appropriate resources to those survivors and co-survivors
- Has policies that follow ADA requirements of non-discrimination (service animals, access to assistive technology/devices, etc.)

### 3. Evaluation

The Program:

- Provides a report of the numbers served on a regular basis (recommended monthly or quarterly)
- Works with a Sexual Assault Response Team or Coordinated Community

Response Team to develop satisfaction surveys, which can be presented to survivors at appropriate times to gather feedback on their medical advocacy experience

- Requires advocates to document services provided, including any form of feedback about services that were offered, and a program supervisor reviews documentation to ensure compliance with the protocol and to review outcomes
- Ensures that the Program Director or Coordinator reviews evaluations regularly and adjusts as needed
- Sends a quarterly request for feedback from medical professionals, law enforcement, and other professionals involved in the hospital/medical response to survivors and communicates with these systems or groups throughout the year to ensure quality of service delivery