

SENATE WOMEN'S ISSUES, CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 2519

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 17, 1997

The Senate Women's Issues, Children and Family Services Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 2519 (1R) with committee amendments.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program in Monmouth county as a continuation of the two-year Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Model Project established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.187.

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Model Project was established in Monmouth county by the Chief of the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy in the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

The program is designed to use forensic nurse sexual assault examiners, who are registered professional nurses or nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialists licensed in the State and trained in forensic science, in accordance with regulations adopted by the New Jersey Board of Nursing with the approval of the Attorney General, to perform sexual assault examinations in an area of the hospital designated solely for sexual assault examinations. The program shall continue to work cooperatively with the rape crisis center operated by the Women's Center of Monmouth County, Inc., in providing assistance to each victim. A representative of the county prosecutor's office or the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy shall meet with each victim, and counseling and other appropriate services pursuant to subsection c. of section 6 of P.L.1985, c.404 (C.52:4B-44c) shall be provided to each victim. The program shall provide the victim with the opportunity to tend to personal hygiene needs and to obtain fresh clothing, as appropriate.

The bill also provides that the Chief of the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy oversee the program in consultation with an advisory committee comprised of: the person designated by the

advisory committee to serve as the program coordinator, and a representative from at least each of the following: the Attorney General, the Division on Women, each hospital participating in the program, the Women's Center of Monmouth County, Inc., a law enforcement agency within the county, and the county prosecutor's office.

Finally, the bill appropriates \$90,000 to the Department of Law and Public Safety to fund the program.

The committee amended the bill to allow the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program to continue past its expiration date of July 27, 1997. The committee also amended the bill to allow, as opposed to require, the Attorney General to adopt rules and regulation necessary to effectuate the purposes of the bill.

The committee also amended the bill to expand the representation of the advisory council, which oversees the program in consultation with the Chief of the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy, to include a representative from the Division on Women.