



The Senate

State of Iowa
Ninetieth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, IA 50319

August 3, 2023

Via electronic mail and regular mail

Honorable Brenna Bird
Attorney General
State of Iowa

Dear Attorney General Bird:

We were disturbed to hear your announcement on Iowa Press that you intend to make permanent your arbitrary prohibition on reimbursing survivors of sexual assault for emergency contraception. Your spokesperson's later backpedaling notwithstanding, it's clear that your office has prejudged this decision regardless of the findings of this alleged audit.

As we have received no official response to our original letter, we reiterate that we urge you to immediately reinstate the Attorney General's longstanding program of providing survivors of sexual assault — the majority of whom are children — with the medical care they need, including access to emergency contraception and safe, legal abortion care. There is no cause to keep the growing number of sexual assault survivors in limbo. These funds exist to help victims, and they are provided by their assailants through fines and restitution. They are not taxpayer funds.

Additionally, we write today to request what legal authority your office claims to possess to selectively choose what medical care receives reimbursement. Iowa Code §915.86 directs that "[t]he department *shall* award compensation" (emphasis added) for "reasonable charges incurred for medical care." Iowa Administrative Code not only defines "medical care" as "services provided by or provided under the supervision of a person licensed under Iowa law as a medical physician or surgeon," but 61—9.35(1)f makes explicit that medical care for pregnancy resulting from the crime of sexual abuse is an eligible cost. In short, no law or rule grants the Attorney General the discretion to prohibit medical care she personally disagrees with. If you have evidence to the contrary, we would very much like to see it.

Finally, we reiterate our requests for:

- the rationale for suspending critical victim services while your office conducts its audit;
- an expected timeline for the completion of your office's victim services audit; and
- listing of all services suspended during the audit and number and type of Iowa victims impacted.

Depriving funding for medical care to victims while your office continues its seemingly indefinite and indefensible audit is an attack on justice. This deprivation is yet another violation to the victim's bodily autonomy. Victims, advocates, prosecutors, and law enforcement deserve to know why needed resources are being withheld by your office. We stand united in urging you to reverse course and allow survivors of sexual assault to care for their bodies and move forward in their healing process.

Thank you, and we look forward to your response.



Janet Petersen
State Senator



Todd Taylor
State Senator



Herman Quirnbach
State Senator



Janice Weiner
State Senator