

Advocacy Support for Victims of Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence

Situation: Patients who are victims of a sexual assault or domestic violence presenting to the emergency department have limited access to an advocacy counselor due to restrictions on visitation related to Covid.

Background: Victims of sexual assault and/or domestic violence present to Advocate Aurora Hospital Emergency Rooms. During the examination, they are offered in-person access to a Rape Crisis or advocacy counselor for emotional support and guidance during their stay in the emergency department. Due to Covid visitor restrictions, virtual/telephone access is offered but few of these victims are using this option.

Assessment: In-person presence is a critical part of the process to support victims of sexual assault and/or domestic violence. If the victim tests Covid negative, the offer to access an in-person advocacy counselor should be made available. The patients will need Cepheid testing to facilitate the process if needed. Across the system, testing volumes should remain at less than 3/day.

Recommendation:

- Offer in-person access to a rape crisis or advocacy counselor if the victim grants permission.
- The patient will be offered the Cepheid test and if negative, can proceed with in-person support. If the patient is Covid positive, virtual access will be offered
- The rape crisis or advocacy counselor will be required to following the visitor screening process before meeting with the patient.