



LB 772: PROTECTING SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

From Debt Collectors

No survivor should be caught in a cycle of debt because they sought the medical care they needed in the aftermath of an assault.

Access to medical care is an essential resource for many survivors. The risk of accruing significant medical debt and associated negative financial consequences, such as a damaged credit rating, can serve as a barrier to survivors seeking appropriate care for their injuries. LB 772 will prevent health care providers from referring medical bills to collection agencies for related treatment from injuries arising from sexual assault, domestic assault and child abuse, reducing the financial hardship survivors experience when seeking medical services.

LB 772 does NOT prevent a health care provider from seeking reimbursement for health care services from the survivor, insurance or other available forms of payment—it simply prevents a survivor from being sent to collections.

Approximately **44% OF VICTIMS** raped by an intimate partner who receive medical care **SPEND ONE OR MORE NIGHTS IN THE HOSPITAL!**¹

Survivors of intimate partner violence on average pay almost **30% OF MEDICAL COSTS OUT-OF-POCKET!**²

Women survivors of abuse experience **42% HIGHER HEALTH CARE COSTS** than their nonabused peers.³

The National Crime Victimization Survey found that **58% OF FEMALE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS EXPERIENCE INJURY!**⁴

Continue reading for an explanation of the importance of LB 772 and what it does.

LB 772 aligns with the Women's Fund values of: **Bodily Autonomy, Equity and Intersectionality.**
To learn more about our mission, vision and values, visit www.OmahaWomensFund.org.



Why is it important that LB 772 specifically supports victims of sexual and domestic assault?

Domestic and sexual violence cases are frequently underreported in comparison to cases involving other violent crimes; nearly half of all instances of domestic violence and more than two out of three sexual assaults go unreported to police.⁵ Whereas survivors might be less likely to report what has happened to them, oftentimes pressing injuries require them to seek care from medical professionals. Health care providers play a unique role in identifying survivors by both providing appropriate care and being a connecting point to other services and professionals.

LB 772 ensures that survivors can receive needed care and will not experience a burden of debt after their visit. By supporting this greater access to care, medical professionals ensure survivors are identified, their situations are reported as needed, and appropriate support and intervention takes place.



How LB 772 Supports Survivors

LB 772 makes it unlawful for a health care provider to:

- Refer a medical bill, related to the treatment of injuries from sexual assault, domestic assault or child abuse, to a collection agency against the victim or the victim's family.
- Distribute information about the status of payment that would affect the victim or victim's family's credit rating in any way.

LB 772 aims to protect survivors from debt collectors but **does not prevent health care providers from seeking payment for the services** from the victim, insurance companies or any other source.

¹ Planty, M., Berzofsky, M., Krebs, C., Langton, L., & Smiley-McDonald, H. (2013). Female victims of sexual violence, 1994-2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvsv9410.pdf>.

² McLean, G., & Gonzales Bocinski, S. "The Economic Cost of Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking," Institute for Women's Policy Research, (August 2017). <https://evawintl.org/wp-content/uploads/TheEconomicCostofIntimatePartnerViolenceSexualAssaultandStalkingFactSheet.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States," Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2003, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPVBook-a.pdf>.

⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Victimization, 2019, (September 2020). <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv19.pdf>.