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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 425**

**TITLE:**             **Criminal Procedure – Sexual Assault Evidence Kits – Privacy Reimbursement, and Notification**

**SPONSOR:**         **Delegate Bartlett**

**COMMITTEE:**      **Judiciary**

**POSITION:**        **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             **February 11, 2020**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 425 - Criminal Procedure – Sexual Assault Evidence Kits – Privacy Reimbursement, and Notification. This proposed legislation mandates that a health care provider must provide notice to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board that services were rendered to a survivor of sexual assault, prohibits the description of the survivor’s experience in requests to obtain payment for services, and alters the services for which the Board is required to pay certain claims and for which a physician or health care provider is immune for civil liability.

Sexual assault is one of the most horrifying and traumatic things that can happen to an individual, and too often survivors find themselves doubly traumatized by what happens afterwards. Rather than being empowered by medical and legal officials, survivors often have their stories overlooked and their pain ignored.

In the recent years, Maryland has taken a number of significant steps to address the buildup of untested rape kits, but more policy changes can be made to help victims. HB 425 aims to put standards in place that prioritize a survivor’s needs first while also providing medical and forensic experts the tools they need to properly do their jobs. By prohibiting a narrative of an alleged offense or a photograph of the victim from being included in physician claims for payment from the from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, this bill would help protect the privacy of survivors and prevent re-victimization.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 425. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.