

Bill Number: SB 950
Scott D. Shellenberger, State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Support

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT D. SHELLENBERGER,
STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY,
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 950
SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMS
THROUGH TELEHEALTH

Scott Shellenberger State's Attorney for Baltimore County, and a member of the Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) Policy and Funding Committee. I write in support of Senate Bill 950 which will allow for Telehealth visits of sexual assault exams and permit reimbursement in the same fashion as in person exams.

Currently there are 22 hospitals that have qualified nurses who are specially trained in conducting sexual assault evidence collection. So if it is 2:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning and a victim has summonsed the courage to drive to a nearby hospital, like Franklin Square Hospital they will to be told to drive to GBMC. This acts as an additional barrier to a victim of sexual assault. This Telehealth Bill would allow the victim to stay at Franklin Square and have the exam performed by a nurse at that location with the oversight of the qualified SAFE nurse, at GBMC or any other SAFE program in the state.

In this day and age Telehealth is done often for all types of "visits". Why not expand this to sexual assault exams? Why would we say to a victim who is in a vulnerable state that he or she needs to go to a different hospital when an exam can be done via Telehealth? This is already being done in Pennsylvania and it works.

Please remember these exams are not just to collect evidence but also to give medical treatment to the victim. We don't want them to leave the hospital and not go to another one and not get the treatment they need and deserve.

I urge a favorable report.