

# Resources for sexual assault survivors continue during COVID-19

 PUBLIC HEALTH OAKLAND · THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020 · 2 MINUTES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 9, 2020

**CONTACT:** Jordan Kennedy, 517-512-5511, [kennedyj11@michigan.gov](mailto:kennedyj11@michigan.gov)

LANSING, Mich. – Counseling, advocacy and resources for survivors of sexual assault remain available during the COVID-19 crisis, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said today.

Michigan’s Sexual Assault Hotline, 855-VOICES4, continues to operate and provide 24/7, free, confidential and anonymous support to survivors of sexual assault, their family, and friends.

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

“Providing support for Michigan’s survivors of sexual assault is an essential service that remains in place during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Gov. Whitmer said. “It’s important to make sure that survivors are aware of these resources – in April and throughout the year.”

Michigan’s Sexual Assault Hotline, 855-VOICES4, was launched in 2018 to provide immediate crisis counseling and referrals to local community-based sexual assault programs and programs that provide sexual assault medical forensic examinations across the state. Last year at the annual *Let’s End Campus Sexual Assault* summit, Gov. Whitmer [announced an expansion to the hotline](#) that now allows survivors to text 866-238-1454 for counseling support.

“The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is committed to easy access to resources for any Michigander who is a survivor of sexual assault,” said Debi Cain, executive director of the MDHHS Division of Victim Services. “This hotline is a critical resource for any survivor in Michigan who needs a safe person to talk to, no matter the time, day or night.”

Raising public awareness about sexual assault, and educating communities about how to prevent it, are the center of the national campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Sexual assault is broadly defined as any form of unwanted sexual contact obtained without

consent. National statistics show that one in three women and one in six men experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime.

“The impact of sexual assault can have lifetime effects for survivors and their families,” said Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel. “In April we recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the need for continued education to better serve survivors and hold their offenders accountable. It is a month dedicated to standing with survivors of sexual assault – honoring and amplifying their voices while providing education on the dynamics and realities of this crime.”

# # #

*If you are a survivor of sexual assault and need to talk, call Michigan’s 24/7, free, confidential and anonymous hotline: 855-VOICES4 (855-864-2374). You can also text 866-238-1454. Resources are also available online at [Michigan.gov/voices4](https://Michigan.gov/voices4).*