

## Fundable Needs

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**Coordinator: Amanda Damm**

Fundable Need: Enhancing the Aurora Healing and Advocacy Services (AHAS)  
Site/Facility: Aurora West Allis Medical Center (AWAMC)  
2019 Approved Capital:  
2019 Fundraising Priority: YES

**Call to Action:** Enhancing Aurora Healing and Advocacy Services (AHAS) at AWAMC

**Proposal:** Create space and access to advocacy care and services on the AWAMC Campus.

**Background:** Aurora Health Care provides a full-service trauma-informed program including crisis intervention and long-term healing services for survivors of rape, incest, sexual abuse, and sexual violence and domestic abuse, experienced during pregnancy. This program serves individuals and families regardless of race, gender, ability, and background. The Aurora Healing Center employs a team of trained professionals including nurses, advocates, volunteers, and counselors who provide compassionate support for people who are on their healing journey.

The AHAS is based at Aurora Sinai Medical Center with outreach to other Aurora facilities. AWAMC has been serving as a satellite center, housing specialized equipment and resources in the Emergency Department to support AHAS staff to come over to conduct a sexual assault examination and initiate advocacy services when survivors present at the facility. AWAMC also supports the Safe Mom Safe Baby (SMSB) program for women who experience domestic violence during pregnancy.

Current statistics from the City of West Allis Police Department (WAPD) indicate a high incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault in our city. In 2017, the WAPD reported 125 cases of sexual assault and over 600 cases of domestic violence - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest suburban volume in Milwaukee County, a rate that is three times higher than in Milwaukee. During the same time period, the AHAS only saw 54 sexual assault cases from West Allis zip codes, less than half seen at AWAMC. Clearly, there is a need for supporting initial ED-based care, but an even greater need for survivors to have access to ongoing advocacy support and follow-up 'close to home' on the AWAMC campus.

A victim "advocate"<sup>1</sup> is a trained professional who works one-on-one with survivors, making sure that they know their options and are guided through the process. Advocates offer information, emotional support, and help survivors to find resources and file paperwork. Sometimes, advocates go to court with victims. Advocates may also contact organizations, such as criminal justice or social service agencies, to get help or information for victims. Some advocates staff crisis hotlines, run support groups, or provide in-person counseling.

Dedicated office space is needed to house advocacy services at AWAMC. The on-site advocates would be funded by the AHAS to provide services to survivors in partnership with existing services (e.g. Behavioral Health, Social Services, SMSB, etc). They could also provide staff and community education to increase awareness and education to support prevention of violence in the community.

**Funding Needs:**

In 2019, Aurora West Allis Medical Center Board and the Aurora Health Care Foundation will reach out to area businesses, foundations and individuals in the West Allis and surrounding areas to raise a total of \$75,000 to create space for advocacy care and services on the AWAMC Campus.

<sup>1</sup> The National Center for Victims of Crime. (2008). *What is a Victim Advocate?*

<http://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/get-help-bulletins-for-crime-victims/what-is-a-victim-advocate->