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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody, FDLE and Victim Advocates Warn of At-Home Sexual Assault Kits

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and victim advocates are warning Floridians about at-home sexual assault kits. The DIY sexual assault kits are marketed as a safe and anonymous option for victims; however, the evidence collected through this process would most likely not be admissible in a criminal case.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As a former judge and prosecutor, I have serious concerns about the emergence of at-home sexual assault kits. Victims of sexual assault need to know they have the right to be examined by caring medical professionals and remain anonymous as a non-reporting victim. The evidence collected is safely stored, and chain-of-custody maintained in case the victim chooses to pursue criminal action at a later date. At-home kits raise all sorts of chain-of-custody and evidence integrity questions and I cannot think of a scenario where a judge would allow these kits to be admissible in a criminal case.”

FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen said, “An assault victim may feel reluctant to reach out for help, but trusting in these do-it-yourself kits does not offer victims the health treatment services they deserve. In addition, the use of these kits would compromise vital evidence necessary to ensure rapists can be identified and arrested. By promptly reporting sexual assaults to the proper authorities, victims can help to not only bring their attackers to justice but to also make sure that the perpetrators can’t victimize anyone else.”

Executive Director of Florida Council Against Sexual Violence Jennifer Dritt said, “We want all Floridians to know that non-reporting victims of sexual assault in Florida have had access to forensic examinations and evidence collection, at no charge, for more than 10 years. That anyone would market these kits as a viable alternative to expert attention from a healthcare professional and immediate access to a rape crisis center or campus-based victim advocate, regardless of reporting status, is shocking.”

In addition to the cost, the self-administered at-home sexual assault kits prevent survivors from receiving essential health care and victim advocate services following an assault. The DIY kits also undermine law enforcement and prosecutors’ efforts to arrest, charge and convict rapists, child molesters and other sex offenders.

The state of Florida provides options for survivors of sexual assault to provide evidence through licensed medical professionals while remaining anonymous and not immediately pressing charges against the perpetrator. Right now, non-reporting victims can receive medical attention, have evidence collected and properly stored, and reserve the option to report to law enforcement at a later date.

For more information on how to report sexual assault, click here.