



**pennsylvania**

OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE

*Giving Crime Victims a Voice*

*Courage • Strength • Resilience*

**August 30, 2019**

## **At-Home Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit Opposition**

**The Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) does not support the marketing and use of the at-home sexual assault evidence collection kit: <http://www.metookit.com/>.**

This method poses severe negative impacts to victims who complete this kit and later realize that this evidence is likely inadmissible in court. The proposed at-home sexual assault evidence collection kits, being marketed on the above website, do not meet the legal requirements in Pennsylvania and leave the victim with no recourse when contacting law enforcement, in the event they wish to pursue legal remedy.\*

Our agency believes in the trauma-informed care and support of health care for victims, following an assault, to assist with the physical needs, as well as immediate safety issues. Trained forensic nurses are vital to evaluating and treating the invisible injuries that often accompany sexual assault. It is important to also note that, in Pennsylvania, patients are not billed for costs related to their sexual assault examination.

All victims/survivors in Pennsylvania are provided with sexual assault counseling and advocacy – free of charge – regardless of their choice to pursue legal action. These trained professionals will discuss options, provide counseling and support, and assist them in navigating what is, so often, a difficult system.

The Pennsylvania laws and polices that have been carefully considered and crafted over the years to support victims/survivors through this process have been painstakingly thorough and addressed through multi-agency collaboration evaluation and review. OVA stands with [PCAR](#) and other sexual assault advocates against the use and marketing of these kits.

\*An at-home evidence collection kit does not comply with the Sexual Assault Testing and Evidence Collection Act (Act 27 of 2015) which indicates that kits used must comply with PA Department of Health's minimum standard requirements; evidence must follow the chain of custody from health care facilities to law enforcement within a 72 hour period; all laboratories used by law enforcements must be approved by the PA Department of Health.

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