Legal Momentum Releases New Curriculum, *Medical Forensic Sexual Assault Examinations: What Are They and What Can They Tell the Courts?*

(New York ~ November 20, 2013) ~ Legal Momentum is pleased to announce the release of its newest model curriculum, *Medical Forensic Sexual Assault Examinations: What Are They and What Can They Tell the Courts?*, created by Legal Momentum’s award-winning National Judicial Education Program with generous support from the Walter and Phyllis Borten Family Foundation and the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women.

Adult victim sexual assault trials bring with them expectations about the kind of injuries a “real” victim will have, the kind of medical evidence that will be offered, who will present it, and what medical evidence can “prove” in these cases. These expectations are at odds with reality and undermine fairness in all aspects of the trial process. The findings of a medical forensic sexual assault examination (sometimes referred to as a “rape kit”) and the testimony of a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) can provide very useful information for the judge and the jury. However, there are important legal limitations on the scope of SANE testimony, as well as limitations as to what the examination findings can actually prove. Legal Momentum’s new curriculum provides accurate information about the medical forensic sexual assault examination, and explores some of the legal issues these cases raise.

Topics covered include:

- The need for specialized health care professionals to treat sexual assault victims;
- How SANEs are trained and their role as neutral healthcare providers;
- The components of a medical forensic sexual assault examination and the types of information it can yield;
- The role of suspect examinations in evidence collection;
- How to evaluate SANEs’ qualifications to present expert witness testimony;
- The legally permissible scope of SANE testimony;
- Recommendations for judges and others.
You can access Legal Momentum’s full curriculum free at the following link:  

While you don’t need to ask permission before using Legal Momentum’s curriculum, we are always interested in learning about the ways you do use it. Please let us know at njep@legalmomentum.org or via Twitter (@LegalMomentum) or Facebook (facebook.com/legalmomentum).

About Legal Momentum

Legal Momentum is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1970 to advance the rights of women by using the power of the law and creating innovative public policy in three broad areas: economic justice, freedom from gender-based violence and equality under the law. For more information visit www.legalmomentum.org.