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**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DOJ Kicks off Regional Sexual Assault Training for Prosecutors During Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul announces that as part of the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s (DOJ) continued effort to improve the criminal justice response to sexual assault, DOJ is offering regional sexual assault training courses for prosecutors across the state. The trainings will equip prosecutors with the knowledge and tools necessary to respond to these complex cases to better serve victims and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

“The Wisconsin Department of Justice is committed to continuing to strengthen Wisconsin’s response to sexual assault,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “These trainings will assist prosecutors who do the vital work of fighting for justice for survivors and ensuring that criminals who commit sexual assault end up behind bars.”

Historically, sexual assault allegations have been approached with grave skepticism.

Contrary to popular opinion, false claims in sexual assault cases are uncommon. The DOJ continually works to dispel misunderstandings about the crime of sexual assault. Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Sarah Burgundy noted in a recent [brief](#) filed with the Wisconsin Supreme Court, there is no data that suggests that rates of false reporting are higher in sexual assault cases than they are for any other criminal case.

DOJ’s new Sexual Assault Resource Prosecutor, Rebecca Sommers, developed and is spearheading the two and 1/2-day regional training courses to help Wisconsin

prosecutors navigate these intricate cases. AAGs Shelly Rusch, Miriam Falk, Annie Jay and Adrienne Blais are assisting as faculty along with Executive Director Michelle Viste and Victim Rights Specialists Anne Kessenich and Hannah Wrobel of the Office of Crime Victim Services. The courses will be held in La Crosse, Superior, Waukesha, and Appleton at different points throughout the year, with the La Crosse course kicking off on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Offering courses in different locations throughout the year is an effort to accommodate prosecutors' busy trial schedules and to allow for the most attendance possible.