



Agence France-Presse

**CHICAGO SAYS
NO MORE**

Illinois hairdressers to look for signs of physical abuse

CHICAGO (AFP-Jan.1, 2017): Illinois starting next week will require salon workers to take training to spot domestic violence and sexual abuse - the first law of its kind in the United States. The new law, which goes into effect January 1, will apply to tens of thousands of hairstylists, barbers and other beauty professionals in the Midwestern state, including in Chicago, the nation's third largest city. It requires barbers and hairstylists to complete an hour-long course on recognizing signs of abuse among their clients and how to offer help. "There's a special relationship between someone who cuts your hair and the client. You talk about everything under the sun," said Fran Hurley, an Illinois state lawmaker who sponsored the measure.

"You go back to the same person over and over again," she said. "Possibly something will be noticed." The state's 88,000 salon professionals will be at the forefront of the new law, although they will not be legally compelled to report any potential abuse to authorities.

"So if they see something, and they choose not to report or engage... they're not held liable," Hurley said.

Chicago Says No More, a non-profit group, helped develop the curriculum to be used in training, which salon workers will have to complete to acquire or retain their government-issued licenses.

"We are dedicated to collaborating in new ways to address the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault," said Kristie Paskvan, founder of the group.

One in three women and one in seven men in the United States experience domestic violence, according to the non-profit, while 20 percent of women and 10 percent of men are victims of rape.

The group is offering informational posters for salons to display, which include telephone hotlines.

The Professional Beauty Association, a national industry group, said it has been offering its members similar training for more than a decade, and that hundreds have taken its course in recognizing both physical and behavioral signs of abuse.

The signs range from bruises that appear to be in different stages of healing, to withdrawing from friends and family members.

Advocates say Illinois is the first to codify such a curriculum into law and to make it part of the formal professional licensure process.

It's "cutting edge, in a good way," Hurley said. "It's an excellent idea."

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