



Hairdressers up to task of identifying abuse, offering aid

POLITICS

Jireh Gibson | Jul 20, 2017



Hairdressers in Illinois have had an extra responsibility in their hands for almost a year since Gov. Bruce Rauner signed into law a measure that requires them to learn to spot the signs of someone suffering from sexual or domestic abuse.

The overall response has been positive despite some initial concerns regarding the potential for being held liable in some way, Kristie Paskvan of Chicago Says No More told the *Sangamon Sun*.



“We worked with Cosmetologist Chicago and state legislators to make sure that was written into the law: That they are not liable for anything they learn, do, or don’t do based on the information they have,” she said. “Once most of them realized the training was free, and it’s only required to take it once during their next renewal, they got a little more comfortable with it.”

The idea originated out of a group gathering at Chicago Says No More, a regional organization that strives to increase awareness about domestic violence. The committee included representatives from the Department of Family Services and the City of Chicago who knew of similar classes that occasionally took place at salons.

“Salons had asked about this type of training because people are having these conversations,” Paskvan said. “They wanted to have more information, so the people on the steering committee thought, ‘Why don’t we make it a part of their training?’”

The state’s 88,000 licensed beauty professionals are now required to take an hour-long course designed to help them recognize the signs of domestic abuse and learn ways to offer help. The hairdressers already must take 14 hours of training, so the hour session on abuse is incorporated into their days.

“We’re not asking them to intervene or call the police on behalf of the client, or anything else that might put them in any more danger than what already exists,” Paskvan said.

Training focuses on recognizing abuse by something a client might say. Facilitators of the training explain that abuse is not always physical; it can also be verbal, physiological or financial. The goal is to provide specific resources for the hairdressers to pass along.

Paskvan said the training is free.

