

**Josh Kaul**  
**Wisconsin Attorney General**



**P.O. Box 7857**  
**Madison, WI 53707-7857**

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## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 20, 2019

### **AG Kaul Announces Testing Complete for All Kits Designated for Testing and New SAKI Grant Awarded**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul announced today that testing is complete for all sexual assault kits designated for testing in the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). Additional data has been updated and added to [wisaki.doj.wi.gov](http://wisaki.doj.wi.gov) including new prosecution progress details. Additionally, AG Kaul also announced Wisconsin was awarded \$1,839,118 from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance to continue the investigation and prosecution of SAKI cases and to fund a statewide kit tracking system.

“These additional grant funds will support our ongoing efforts to get justice for survivors whose sexual assault kits weren’t tested prior to the SAKI project,” said Attorney General Kaul.

As of November 20, 2019, testing is complete for all kits designated for testing in the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. Currently, 1,029 kits with foreign DNA identified have been added to a national database of DNA profiles, out of 4,471 tested sexual assault kits. The latest data can be found at [wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/data-results](http://wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/data-results).

### **Additional Updated Data**

In tandem with local jurisdictions, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has reviewed 1,327 cases and continues to review cases. These case reviews include examining police reports, identifying potential safety risks to the public and the survivor(s), identifying legal impediments to a renewed investigation or prosecution such as statute of limitations concerns or plea agreements, assessment of whether

survivor notification is appropriate, and whether additional samples are needed from a suspect(s).

At this time, 39 cases have been referred for a charging decision. Some of these cases are referred back to DOJ for possible prosecution, and some have not resulted in criminal charges.

A total of 12 criminal cases related to SAKI kits have been filed. A breakdown of the status of these cases can be found [here](#).

As of November 20, 2019, a decision has been made to notify survivors about the results of 115 sexual assault kits; notification was not able to be made in connection with 28 of those kits. At this time, notification is not being made about the results of the testing of 1,012 sexual assault kits. Cases associated with 511 sexual assault kits remain in the review process for possible survivor notification about kit results. The decision whether to notify a survivor can change over time.

Reasons provided by a multi-disciplinary team or local law enforcement for not notifying survivors include:

- Sexual assault kit testing was inconclusive, not identifying a suspect;
- The case related to the sexual assault kit was already prosecuted or there is already a warrant issued but the suspect has not been located;
- Case currently not proceeding to prosecution because the DNA testing provided no new information or investigative leads;
- The survivor connected with the sexual assault kit chose not to report to law enforcement; and,
- Notification might not be safe or appropriate at this time depending on survivor or dynamics of the case.

### **Sexual Assault Kit Initiative 2019 Grant Award**

DOJ was awarded \$1,839,118 to continue the investigation and prosecution of SAKI cases and to fund a statewide kit tracking system.

As the SAKI project has evolved, it is clear the DOJ Sexual Assault Response Team, funded by SAKI 2015 grant, is needed for a longer period. Utilizing the new grant funding, this team will continue providing guidance to local jurisdictions pursuing investigative leads generated from kit testing by continuing the two special agent positions, as well as assisting with survivor notifications and/or prosecutions by continuing the victim services specialist and assistant attorney general positions for an additional two years.

Additionally, the 2019 grant will help achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the response to sexual assault, by funding a system where survivors can directly retrieve information about the status of their kit. A kit tracking system will offer the ability to monitor the amount of time that a kit spends at different points in the process. This grant will allow DOJ to develop and implement a tracking system. This kit tracking system will support pending legislative reform which would create a statutory framework for kit submission and retention.

**For survivors looking for information about their kit, contact the law enforcement agency where the assault was reported, a local sexual assault service provider, or the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services at 1-800-446-6564.**

A sexual assault can be one of the most traumatic experiences in a survivor's life, often having a long-term impact. Any attempt to notify a survivor of testing results or to offer them the opportunity to re-engage with the criminal justice system must be victim-centered, trauma-informed, and protective of their confidentiality and privacy. This includes:

- Respecting the survivor's choice not to engage;
- Attending to the survivor's emotional safety, as well as their physical safety;
- Empowering the survivor by offering options and providing ongoing information, resources, services, and support; and,
- Educating responding professionals and the general community about the impact of trauma on survivors' health and well-being.

For more information and data about Wisconsin's effort to end the backlog of sexual assault kits, go to [wisaki.wi.doj.gov](https://wisaki.wi.doj.gov).

- Testing results by county: <https://wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/testing-results>
- DNA matches by county, and matches to other states: <https://wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/codis-hits>
- Survivor Notification: <https://wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/survivor-notifications>