

Life Threat

How sick must a woman be to get a Medical Assistance abortion due to a threat to her life?

If continuing a pregnancy would endanger the woman's life, her Medical Assistance will pay for an abortion.

A doctor must sign a form saying that she needs an abortion because of a life-threatening physical problem, such as cancer, AIDS, or very high blood pressure, or a life-threatening mental or psychological problem, such as severe depression or threatened suicide.

What if an illness or condition other than the pregnancy is threatening her life?

It doesn't matter whether the life threat is caused by the pregnancy or by some underlying or separate condition. If the doctor believes, in his or her good faith clinical judgment, that an abortion is necessary because the woman's life is in danger, she can get a Medical Assistance abortion.

What forms does she need to get a "life-threat" Medical Assistance abortion?

She will need a "Physician Certification for an Abortion" form (MA-3). The CHOICE hotline or Women's Medical Fund can fax them to her doctor if needed.

What if the woman needs to travel?

Medical Assistance is required to pay a patient's transportation expenses to any Medical Assistance-covered medical service.

Each county has a Medical Assistance Transportation Program. In Philadelphia, call **WHEELS** 215-563-2000.

In other counties, call your Managed Care Organization or County Assistance Office.

For legal help in getting Medical Assistance from DPW or for help in getting Medical Assistance to pay for transportation to medical care, call **Welfare Law Line** 215-227-6485
Community Legal Services 215-227-2400

Where can a woman call to get help?

CHOICE 215-985-3300
toll-free: 800-848-3367
en español: 215-985-3350
Call for help finding doctors, clinics, or Medicaid HMOs.

Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund
215-772-0602
Call for no-interest loans for abortions in southeastern Pennsylvania.

National Abortion Federation Hotline
1-800-772-9100
Call for no-interest loans for abortions outside of southeastern Pennsylvania.

Women's Law Project
215-928-9801 / 412-227-0301
Call for legal assistance with abortion.

To Enroll as a Medicaid Provider

For enrollment information, forms, and training, call the Department of Public Welfare or visit <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap/provinc/enrollapps/omapenrolap.asp>

Medical Assistance

for Abortion in Pennsylvania

- **When a woman is pregnant from rape or incest**
- **When a woman needs an abortion to save her life**

CHOICE

Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund
Women's Law Project

With assistance from the
Institute for Reproductive Health Access
of the NARAL-NY Foundation

When does Medical Assistance pay for abortion in Pennsylvania?

- When a woman is pregnant from rape or incest
- When a woman needs an abortion to save her life

Rape and Incest

What is rape?

Rape is defined as sexual intercourse

- by force (hitting, kicking, using a weapon)
- by threatening to hurt the woman
- when the woman is drugged or unconscious (asleep, drunk, high, knocked out)
- when the woman cannot consent due to mental illness or retardation
- when the woman is younger than 13
- when the woman is younger than 16 and her partner is four or more years older

These situations are all rape, even if the woman knows the perpetrator or had sex with him before.

What is incest?

Incest is sex with a parent, grandparent, brother, uncle, or nephew, or with someone who lives with the woman and acts as a parent to her (e.g., her mother's boyfriend).

For incest, it does not matter how old the people involved are or whether force was used.

How does a survivor of rape or incest get a Medical Assistance abortion?

If she is otherwise eligible for Medical Assistance, both she and a treating physician must fill out forms saying that she was raped.

Any doctor who is giving her medical treatment can sign the form, including her abortion provider.

What forms does she need to get a Medical Assistance abortion?

She will need a "Physician Certification for an Abortion" form (MA-3), and a "Recipient Statement" form (MA-368). The CHOICE hotline or Women's Medical Fund can fax them to her doctor if needed.

The forms must be completed before the abortion in order for the medical provider to be reimbursed for the procedure.

Does the rape have to be reported to the police?

No! Most survivors are too traumatized to report rape. If both the woman and her doctor sign the part of the form saying that she is physically or psychologically unable to report the rape, she does not have to report it.

If the woman is under 18 and has been raped by a family member or caretaker, certain professionals who are required to report child abuse may have to notify Child Protective Services on her behalf.

What if she wants to make a police report?

Women who have been raped should be supported and encouraged if they decide to file a police report. It is sometimes difficult to get the police to accept reports of rape, especially if the woman knows her assailant or if there has been any delay in reporting. There is no time limit on reporting a rape, and the rape survivor does not have to know the rapist's name or the exact date of the assault to get a Medical Assistance abortion or make a police report.

How can a doctor be sure she's telling the truth?

There is no evidence that women lie about rape to get abortions, but there is a mountain of evidence that women who have been sexually assaulted are wrongly treated with suspicion and disbelief. If the woman makes a false statement in signing the form, she can be prosecuted. The doctor is not a detective and will not be held responsible for a patient's false statements as long as the doctor has a good faith belief that she is telling the truth.

What if her doctor refuses to sign the form?

She can either go to another doctor or call CHOICE or the Women's Medical Fund for help. In addition, she may want to make a complaint to her Managed Care Organization or Medicaid HMO.