

## Fact Sheet for Forensic Interviews for Child Physical and Sexual Assault

The State Office of Victim Assistance (SOVA) is authorized by state law (**SC CODE SEC 16-3-1350**) to pay for allowable charges incurred in gathering evidence from a victim at law enforcement's request. The forensic interviewer must be a master's level mental health professional and have participated in at least one forty-hour specialized forensic interviewer training provided through the American Prosecutor's Research Institute (APRI) Finding Words, the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), or the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). If not licensed, the forensic interviewer must be supervised by a licensed mental health professional, i.e. LMSW, LISW, LMFT, or LPC. The interviews must be conducted at a facility that follows the multi-disciplinary model and has been approved by SOVA.

To receive reimbursement for performing a forensic interview, an itemized bill for services rendered as well as a summary of the findings must be submitted and signed by the service provider. Providers must have previously been approved by SOVA. Victims or their insurance must not be billed for these services.

In addition, a release form must be completed and submitted along with the itemized bill and summary of findings. This release must include:

1. Victim's name, address and signature of the victim/guardian;
2. Name, credentials and signature of the forensic interviewer;
3. Name and address of the provider;
4. Location of crime and name of the law enforcement agency that took the report;
5. Name of the investigating/reporting officer (and signature, if available).

Payment for a forensic interview of a child alleged to be the victim of physical or sexual assault is dependant upon the following conditions:

1. The crime must have occurred in South Carolina
2. The victim or guardian must file an incident report with law enforcement
3. The forensic interview must be performed using the standards defined by SOVA.

When forensic interviews are completed for siblings/multiple children from the same household, a law enforcement incident report that names each child as a victim is required along with the billing information.

This forensic interview reimbursement program can not pay for additional procedures such as psychological testing/evaluation or mental health treatment. Victims who incur other crime related medical or mental health bills may submit a separate Crime Victim's Compensation application to SOVA. The application will be reviewed for eligibility for certain benefits including mental health counseling. A victim must file with his or her health insurance first for other incurred expenses. SOVA will consider balances due for mental health treatment after payment by individual insurance.

For more information visit [www.sova.sc.gov](http://www.sova.sc.gov) then click on 'Payment & Reimbursement Guide', then scroll down to 'Part Two'.