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Illinois beauticians trained in domestic violence support: How clients will be affected

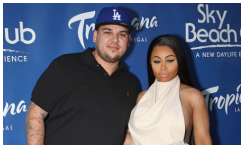


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Whether natural, relaxed, curly or short, there's a beauty salon culture that women (and men) understand. Clearly vanity and cleanliness are in the top two goals for visiting a beauty salon.

Are you sure your conversations in the barber shop or beauty salon are private? (Photo credit: iStock)

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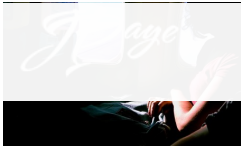
“Barbershops and beauty salons are perhaps second only to black churches as institutions in the community,” said Ingrid Banks, an associate professor of Black Studies at University of California, Santa Barbara and author of “Hair Matters: Beauty, Power, and Black Women’s Consciousness,” to [CNN](#).

But outside of the hairstyles, conversations will come up about everything from parenthood to politics and marriage to money. And trusted hairstylists may learn a bit more about their clients — both the good and the ugly. In a recent report from [Associated Press via Sauk Valley](#), Illinois has a new law (HB 4264) that requires all hairstylists in the state to be trained in domestic violence support and response, which goes into effect on January 1, 2017.

The idea of the act is not new though. The Professional Beauty Association’s “[Cut It Out](#)” program has been around since March 2003 courtesy of the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham and the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. With an average of approximately [20 people per minute](#) being physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States (over 10 million women and men each year), the nationwide expansion could

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clearly be of use on a larger scale. The National Cosmetology Association expanded the program on a nationwide scale for hundreds of hair professionals to get on board.

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However, with the new law in effect, there may be some clients who are concerned about whether their own private confessions will be released to the public or authorities without their consent. That's not the case.

Under the [Act](#), “The continuing education for the first renewal of a cosmetologist’s license shall include both domestic violence and sexual assault awareness education. For every subsequent renewal of a cosmetologist’s license, the domestic violence and sexual assault awareness education shall be an optional course to help fulfill the continuing education requirements.”



(Photo credit: iStock)

In the domestic violence and sexual assault awareness course, hair professionals will be trained to recognize signs of abuse and be able to provide victims with resources to remove themselves from these mentally and/or physically abusive circumstances. This new law may also help to encourage women to use beauty salons as safe havens.

The new law does not require beauty industry professionals to report any information they learned about a domestic violence incident or sexual assault from a client at the salon or barbershop. Further, a beauty professional cannot be held criminally or civilly liable for failing to act on information he or she obtained during the course of employment concerning potential domestic violence or sexual assault.

However, the new law does not stop a beauty professional or any other patron in the beauty shop from reporting a conversation they heard about a sexual assault or domestic violence. When sharing personal information in a salon, patrons should be mindful that the information can be reported to a third party, including parents who may be

endangering their children in households with domestic violence. Just as the police may be informed, so can the Department of Child Services.

In the meantime, even outside of beauty professionals, for those who would like to find help, visit organizations such as the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) or (locally) the

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Have more questions about new legislation for 2017 that can impact your business? Contact [J. Paye & Associates](#) today.

Shamontiel L. Vaughn contributed to this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

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