

# [***Iowa attorney general not finished with audit that's holding up contraception money for rape victims***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BN6-VGM1-DYMD-64FF-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Iowa attorney general’s office said it is still working on an audit of its victim services that has held up [*emergency contraception funding*](https://apnews.com/article/iowa-rape-victims-contraception-funding-41ad066f0831961eeec57a676b4a67d6) for victims of sexual assault.

Attorney General Brenna Bird, a Republican, paused the funding while awaiting the results of the audit to decide whether to continue those payments. Her office said the audit, which Bird announced when she took office 14 months ago, is in its “final stages” and that a report would be released soon.

The policy under her Democratic predecessor, Tom Miller, had been to partially cover the cost of contraception for sexual assault victims. In rare cases, the cost of abortion for sexual assault victims was also covered, Miller’s victim assistance division director, Sandi Tibbetts Murphy, told the Des Moines Register last year.

“As a part of her top-down, bottom-up audit of victim assistance, Attorney General Bird is carefully evaluating whether this is an appropriate use of public funds,” said Alyssa Brouillet, Bird's communications director. "Until that review is complete, payment of these pending claims will be delayed.”

The Register filed an open records request into the audit in October. After five months, Bird’s office completed the records request but declined to release any documents to the Register, citing a section of Iowa Code excluding preliminary documents from public records law.

Federal and state law requires medical examination costs for victims of sexual assault are covered to ensure forensic evidence is collected readily and properly. In Iowa, costs are covered by the attorney general office’s crime victim compensation program, which is funded by state and federal criminal fines and penalties.

Materials from Miller’s administration show the costs for victims’ prescriptions for oral contraceptives and the Plan-B morning-after pill, as well as for the prevention or treatment of sexually transmitted infections, were reimbursed at 75%.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Iowa said in a statement that the audit is being used to justify the termination of payments.

“It’s absolutely deplorable that sexual assault survivors in Iowa have gone more than a year without state-covered emergency contraceptives — all because of ***politics***,” said Mazie Stilwell, director of public affairs.

Bird campaigned to replace the 10-term Miller highlighting her opposition to abortion and her commitment to defending Iowa’s restrictive abortion law, which she will do again during oral arguments before the [*state Supreme Court*](https://apnews.com/article/iowa-abortion-ban-lawsuit-appeal-5b7ebe1fccfcba7e2e30883be4f510fb) in April. The [*law*](https://apnews.com/article/iowa-abortion-ban-special-session-506e5e3fcd5517024a94a8e3a52d627e), currently on hold, would ban most [*abortions*](https://apnews.com/hub/abortion) after about six weeks of pregnancy if it is upheld.

Bird's office said the crime victim compensation fund is being used to cover costs of sexual assault examinations, as well as rape kits and STI tests.

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This story has been corrected to remove reference to a completed draft of the audit. The Iowa attorney general’s office says work on the audit is continuing.

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