



**Mission:** *To promote a community-wide response to sexual violence by coordinating a multi-disciplinary team that will ensure victims receive comprehensive, compassionate care*

## **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) General Meeting Minutes Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

### **Call to Order:**

Nicole Bishop, Director, Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS)

### **Welcome/Introductions of Members and Guests:**

Nicole Bishop welcomed all who were in attendance at the meeting and facilitated introductions.

**Review/Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved without any changes.

Nicole shared with SART members that PBCVS has seen a decrease in victims reporting a sexual assault. PBCVS has utilized social media to reach out to victims to let them know that we are open and available. She further explained that although 2020 was a challenging year, she is encouraging SART members to get back on track with reviewing their SART protocols in 2021.

Nicole also provided a summary of the July-December 2020 reporting period from the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) Grant. She highlighted a few key activities:

- SART continues to grow with 29 represented agencies at our monthly meetings
- SART provided 17 trainings to 321 law enforcement officers, mental health professionals, medical professionals, community partners, school educators and administrative.
- 4 SART case staffing's were held, 20 cases were staffed
- 67 SART members participated during this reporting period.

Nicole informed SART members that as a SART we have been able to sustain and she looks forward to continuing to celebrate the great work we have done.

### **On-Going Business:**

*SANE Report: Lisa Alward, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Coordinator PBCVS*

Lisa Alward was unable to attend the SART meeting and Carol Messam-Gordon reported on the Sexual Assault Responses for November and December 2020. SANEs responded to 31 calls and conducted 30 forensic exams. In the total call-outs, there were 8 non-reporting victims. 18 exams were completed at the Butterfly House and 12 were completed at a local Palm Beach County Hospital ER. There were 186 SANE exams during 2020.

*Child Protection Team Report: Alison Hitchcock, Executive Director, Child Protection Team*

Alison provided the child abuse and child sexual abuse CPT case statistics for both November and December 2020.

## November 2020

- 846 Abuse Reports Screened
- 61 Cases Opened
- 150 Services Provided
- 10 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 2 Sexual Assault Kits were completed

## December 2020

- 923 Abuse Reports Screened
- 74 Cases Opened
- 202 Services Provided
- 12 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 6 Sexual Assault Kits were completed

### Laboratory Testing Updates: Julie Sikorsky, Forensic Laboratory Manager, PBSO

Julie updated SART members on the rape kit backlog, the timeframe for processing sexual assault kits, the number of kits tested and the numbers remaining. Julie's team is still reviewing Pre SB 636 cases. Julie informed SART members that a Lot of Sexual Assault Kits (SAK) are being delivered on Monday and she is in the process of coordinating with Victim Services to collect and distribute them.

- ▶ Crime Lab sent to SID for review:
  - ▶ 958 cases without SAKs to SID for additional review (older cases)
    - ▶ SID has completed the review of 508 cases, 450 remaining (down 37 cases)  
Classified as:
      - ▶ Does not need analysis (no physical evidence, etc.)
      - ▶ To be outsourced for DNA analysis
      - ▶ Additional research needed for possible evidence (forwarded to review list)
  - ▶ **Current cases** without a DNA request after *monthly* evidence vault query:
    - ▶ 5 Post SB 636 cases without a SAK
    - ▶ 22 Post SB 636 cases with a SAK
- ▶ Total SA cases reviewed (pre & post SB 636): 10,354 (up 66 cases)
  - ▶ 9,283 analyzed or do not need analysis (up 30 cases)
  - ▶ 150 identified to be outsourced (up 8 cases)
  - ▶ 35 identified to be processed in-house with *Rapid DNA analysis* (up 6 cases)
  - ▶ 73 requested to be processed in-house (screening/DNA)
  - ▶ 24 Other pending (up 4 cases)
  - ▶ 789 cases pending additional review for possible SA evidence for DNA analysis
    - ▶ 484 (up 1 case) are from PBSO or merged agencies
    - ▶ 305 are from non-PBSO agencies (PBSO will need to reach out for these agencies to do research)
- ▶ Pre SB636 Cases
  - ▶ Outsourced: 1679
  - ▶ Profiles entered into CODIS: 845 profiles from 795 cases (no changes)
    - ▶ From evidence: 732
    - ▶ Suspect samples: 113
  - ▶ CODIS hits (across all agencies): 313 (up 2)
  - ▶ 13 arrests made: 9=PBSO, 4=WPBPD (no changes)

SART Case Staffing's: Carol Messam-Gordon, PBCVS Program Coordinator

Carol updated SART members on the sexual assault case staffing's held on December 11<sup>th</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup>. Ten cases were staffed. In attendance were Advocates, Coordinators, Team supervisors, and SANEs. She provided summaries on 3 of the cases:

**Case 1:** A 49-year-old female was sexually assaulted by her ex-boyfriend. Victim reported that she ran into her ex-boyfriend at a restaurant in West Palm Beach. While at the restaurant they got into an argument and the victim left the restaurant and went home. The victim's ex-boyfriend later showed up at the victim's home, broke into her home & held her inside the home overnight. The victim reported that the suspect violently and physically sexually assaulted her and prevented her from leaving or using the phone. The following day, the suspect took the victim to Home Depot to buy supplies to fix her door that he broke down. While at Home Depot, the victim took the opportunity to get away from the suspect and was able to contact law enforcement. Law enforcement responded to the victim and transported her to the Butterfly House (BH) for a forensic exam. Prior to going out to the Butterfly House law enforcement did not contact a victim advocate to coordinate arrival time. When Law enforcement arrived at the Butterfly House there was another case. Law enforcement had to wait outside the Butterfly House until the facility was available for the victim to be seen. The suspect, in this case, was arrested & presently remains in jail. The advocate has not been able to reach the victim to complete the Sexual Assault Relocation and to offer additional services. Assigned advocate will make contact with assigned Detective to check on the status of the case and also to schedule a welfare check on the victim. If contact is made with victim, advocate will also provide information about Office of Attorney General relocation funds, and the VINE program.

**Case 2:** 22-year-old female was hanging out with friends. Victim and her friends met a group of males and decided to hang out with them. The victim and her friends got separated and this victim was later found with one of the males at a hotel. The victim and her friend are unable to recall events from the evening and believed they were drugged by these males. The victim also believes she was sexually assaulted. A sexual assault kit and interview was completed at the Butterfly House. An advocate will provide follow-up to the victim and will make contact with assigned detective regarding the status of the case.

**Case 3:** Victim was in a Drug Rehab facility from. Victim left the facility and reported that she was sexually assaulted by several men she met on the street. Victim also said that she met a known drug dealer who also sexually assaulted her. The victim reported that the suspect locked her in a van and assaulted her. The victim said that eventually she was released and returned back to the Drug Rehab facility where she reported that she was assaulted. The facility contacted Victim Services and law enforcement. The victim was taken to the Butterfly House by law enforcement to be interviewed and for a forensic exam. During the victim's interview, the victim shared information about being trafficked. Advocate on the case contacted VS Human Trafficking (HT) Grant Coordinator to staff the case. The case was identified as a HT case and was turned over to the HT Task Force. The victim was provided assistance and the HT Grant Coordinator is following up and providing assistance to this victim.

## **Committee Reports:**

### Community Action Network: Carol Messam-Gordon, PBCVS Program Coordinator

Carol informed SART members that CAN is currently preparing for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The minutes from the meeting that was held on January 26<sup>th</sup> will be sent out to SART members to provide an update on all the activities and events that were discussed. She encouraged SART members to get involved in all the events and that she will provide updates when events and activities are finalized.

### Training Committee: Kristen Ferguson, PBCVS Project Coordinator

Kristen informed SART members that the next training committee meeting is scheduled for February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. A calendar invite will be sent out to members to participate in reviewing the results from the SART training survey.

### Legislative Committee: PBC Legislative Delegation & Abby Ross, Legislative Aide for Sen Berman

Abby was unable to attend the SART meeting. Deborah Posey from Representative Hastings Office informed SART members that there are currently no updates.

Nicole informed SART members that Florida Coalition against Sexual Violence (FCASV) is currently looking into a tracking system for rape kits. Carol provided an update on the recent presentation that was facilitated by FCASV. She stated that FCASV is working with its legislative department to find ways in which this new system can be implemented throughout the state. This new system will allow victims to track their rape kits from the time it is collected until it is processed. Updates will be provided to SART members as more information is shared.

## **New Business:**

*“20 Ways You Can Help fight Human Trafficking”- The US Department of State*

<https://www.state.gov/20-ways-you-can-help-fight-human-trafficking/>

Nicole informed SART members that January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month. She reviewed a few of the tips that were given in the article, “20 Ways you can help fight Human Trafficking”. Please see attached link on ways to stay involved and help fight Human Trafficking.

## **Community Corner:**

*“Human Trafficking Task Force Overview”- Sergeant Carol Lisboa- Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office and the Human Trafficking Task Force.*

Sergeant Lisboa provided an overview of the Palm Beach County Human Trafficking Task Force. He reviewed the events that took place in January for Human Trafficking Prevention Month. He also provided SART members with information on ways to get involved as well as resources that are beneficial to the public. Sergeant Lisboa encouraged SART members to get involved in upcoming events such as the 3rd Annual Race for Freedom - Virtual 5K which is February 20-28. To register, visit [www.pbcpcb.org/ht-5k](http://www.pbcpcb.org/ht-5k) . Please see attached pdf presentation. If you have any questions or comments for Sgt. Lisboa, you are encouraged to contact him at [lisboac@pbso.org](mailto:lisboac@pbso.org)



PBCHTF-SART  
Presentation .pdf

(PDF is attached in the email)

**Member field discussion:** Nicole opened the floor to members to discuss successful collaborations or provide updates.

Kristen informed SART members that the annual SART member survey will be sent out after the SART meeting with a link to survey monkey. The survey will be open until February 19<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this survey is to hear from SART members and to get feedback on how we can improve as a SART for 2021.

Kristen also informed SART members that we are now accepting nominations for the 2020 SART Member of the Year. An email was sent out earlier in the day with the nomination form and information on the criteria for nominees. Kristen informed the members that the nomination forms need to be submitted on or before Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Next meeting date:** February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 2 pm-3 pm

**Thank you!**