



**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, March 25<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 the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved without any changes.

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

#### *SANE Report: Carol Messam-Gordon, PBCVS Program Coordinator*

Carol Messam-Gordon reported on the Sexual Assault Responses for February 2021. SANEs responded to 20 calls and conducted 18 forensic exams. In the total call-outs, there were 2 non-reporting victims. 12 exams were completed at the Butterfly House and 6 were completed at a local Palm Beach County Hospital ER. Carol also informed SART members that the SANE team had a Chart Review on February where 18 charts were reviewed. Carol also congratulated the SANEs for the phenomenal work they continuously do with victims.

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

Alison was not in attendance. In her absence, Kristen provided the child abuse and child sexual abuse CPT case statistics for February 2021.

### **January 2021**

- 930 Abuse Reports Screened
- 112 Cases Opened
- 200 Services Provided
- 13 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.

- ▶ Crime Lab sent to SID for review:
  - ▶ 958 cases without SAKs to SID for additional review (older cases)

- ▶ SID has completed the review of 729 cases, 229 remaining (down 87 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:
  - ▶ 2 Post SB 636 cases without a SAK
  - ▶ 14 Post SB 636 cases with a SAK
- ▶ Total SA cases reviewed (pre & post SB 636): 10,646 (up 125 cases)
  - ▶ 9,503 analyzed or do not need analysis (up 123 cases)
  - ▶ 225 identified to be outsourced (up 30 cases) (62 outsourced, 163 awaiting)
  - ▶ 40 identified to be processed in-house with *Rapid DNA analysis* (up 2 cases)
  - ▶ 62 requested to be processed in-house (screening/DNA) *analysis* (down 32 cases)
  - ▶ 10 Other pending (down 15 cases)
  - ▶ 806 cases pending additional review for possible SA evidence for DNA analysis (up 17 cases)
    - ▶ 500 are from PBSO or merged agencies
    - ▶ 306 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): 315 (up 2 cases)
  - ▶ 13 arrests made: 9=PBSO, 4=WPBPD (no changes)

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

Rene Boone, SART Team Supervisor updated SART members on the sexual assault case staffing held on March 12<sup>th</sup> where 6 cases were staffed. In attendance were Advocates, Coordinators, Team supervisors, and SANEs. Rene provided summaries on 3 of the cases:

**Case 1:** A 69 year-old woman was brought to JFK Atlantis Hospital after having a cardiac arrest & she had a tracheostomy. A nurse was told that the victim was brought from a care facility where she had communicated with her facility's speech therapist that she had been sexually assaulted. The nurse and doctor reported this to Victim Services and LE. Advocate and SANE responded to the hospital, met with the victim and established that the victim was aware and coherent but unable to communicate verbally due to her tracheostomy. The SANE suggested that the use of an alphabet chart or word chart would be helpful for the victim to communicate. The advocate used markers and notepad to make an alphabet chart. The victim was able to communicate using the chart, give consent to have a SAK completed, and stated that "Mr. B" had assaulted her. The case is still under investigation. The advocate is in contact with the victim's husband and continues to provide support to the victim and her family.

**Case 2:** A father showed up at the hospital with his 15 year-old daughter and stated he wanted her tested to see if she had any STDs or had been sexually assaulted. Victim Services was contacted and an advocate spoke with the father to obtain information and provide support. WRMC was

directed to contact LE. The father stated that his 32-year-old neighbor contacted him and told him that his daughter was having sex with various men in the neighborhood and sending naked pictures. PBSO was contacted and the victim was brought to CPT for an interview and exam. While the advocate was at CPT meeting with the victim's father, the father received text messages from the neighbor with nude pictures from the neighbor of his daughter. Victim's father shared the photos with the detective. Detective in this case had the father do a controlled call to the 32-year-old neighbor who admitted that he had been having sex with the 15 year-old. The suspect was arrested and charged with 8 counts of Lewd or Lascivious Behavior Promote Sexual Activity Victim Less than 16 and 2 counts of Transmitting Child Pornography.

**Case 3:** An advocate was assisting a victim with a Domestic Violence Stalking Injunction. The victim disclosed that her ex-significant other had exhibited obsessive behaviors towards his 14 year-old daughter. She reported that suspect regularly gets his daughter waxed and makes inappropriate comments to her. The victim also disclosed finding nude pictures of children on the suspect's phone. She also reported that the suspect has been in contact with a young girl in a foreign country and discussed buying her virginity. Based on the information that was disclosed, the advocate identified many HT indicators. The advocate contacted PBSO and PBCVS HT Program Coordinator and staffed the case. PBSO deputies took a report and PBSO HT Task Force will be setting up an interview with the reporting victim. The Abuse Hotline was contacted and a report was made. The advocate also assisted the victim with the DV Injunction.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### *Community Action Network: Brieana Salter, Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator*

Nicole introduced our new Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator; Brieana Salter to SART.

Brieana informed SART members that CAN was held on March 24<sup>th</sup> and during this meeting Sexual Assault Awareness Month events and activities were finalized. The theme this year is "We Can Build Safe Online Spaces". The calendar of events was sent out via email to CAN and SART members. Brieana also provided SART members a summary of the events taking place throughout April.

PBCVS will be hosting their 5<sup>th</sup> annual Field of Hope which will be on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> from 4pm-6pm. Survivors and the community are invited to drive through, gain information about sexual assault and online safety. Survivors will also be encouraged to write a personal message on a flag that will be provided to plant in the Field of Hope. To ensure safety, this event will be a drive-thru experience and guests are required to remain in their vehicle unless planting a flag with a personal message in the Field of Hope.

Other activities that were highlighted included:

- April 7<sup>th</sup> – Start By Believing Day: A day to raise awareness on how to better respond to sexual assault as professionals and/or law enforcement. PBCVS will be providing a token of appreciation to law enforcement and state attorney's on that day.
- On April 12<sup>th</sup> – Detective Brent Joseph from Boynton Beach Police Department will be having a virtual "Story Time" with children ages 3-5.
- April 15<sup>th</sup> - PBCVS therapists will be hosting "Yoga-ish". This event will be an hour of trauma-informed yoga followed by an open conversation for teens in grades 9-12.

- April 16<sup>th</sup> - In observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month PBCVS is encouraging everyone to wear teal or a teal ribbon.
- April 29 - PBCVS is partnering with Palm Beach County Library to host 2 events. First event is a 2-hour presentation for teens titled “It’s The Online Safety For Me.” This event is to provide teens with safety tips on how to remain safe when they are online. Event will be facilitated by Renee Rivers from Planned Parenthood and Detective Grimaldi from PBSO. The second event titled “Online Safety—What You Wish You Knew” is a presentation with online safety tips for parents and will be facilitated by Alex Ortiz from the Child Rescue Coalition.

Briana reminded SART members that CAN meetings are held every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month from 9am-10:30am. She encouraged SART members to attend the monthly meetings and participate in the events throughout Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Training Committee: Kristen Ferguson, PBCVS Project Coordinator

Kristen informed SART members that the next training committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm-3:00pm. This meeting will focus on finalizing the various training projects for 2021.

Kristen also encouraged SART members to register for the two upcoming Language Access Trainings:

- Language Access Considerations for **Law Enforcement**: April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 from 12pm-4pm <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LACLE2021>
- Language Access Considerations for **Advocates**: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 12pm-4pm <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LACA2021>

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

Abby was not in attendance. In her absence, Kristen informed SART members that SB 1044/HB 767 was going to be put on the legislative agenda and would be heard on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. SB 1044/HB 767 refers to the protection of victims’ privacy and anonymity; anyone wanting to disclose a victim of sexual assault’s name will be required to get written consent from the victim. Kristen also informed SART members that once Abby sends updates, they will be sent out.

**New Business:**

Nicole informed SART members that the Attorney General’s Office reimburses sexual assault forensic exams and for over a decade, the reimbursement rate has been \$500. Last year, the legislator agreed to pay a reimbursement rate of \$1,000; however, the Attorney General Office was unable to fund that new legislation. It was recently discovered, that \$1,000 has been approved as the new reimbursement rate. This will assist with increasing the pay for the SANE nurses; it will also assist CPT with the reimbursement for the exams on minors.

Nicole also informed SART members that we are in the process of planning for the Law Enforcement SART meetings as a result of the Annual SART Survey. Kristen is in the process of setting up a planning committee to finalize the dates, times and content of the meeting. Nicole encouraged Law Enforcement to participate in the planning meeting.

Kristen informed SART members that the General Member SART meetings will be 6 times a year and the Law Enforcement SART meetings will be 4 times a year. The next General Member meeting will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-3pm. The first Law Enforcement meeting will be on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-3pm. An email with the schedule will be sent out to SART members.

Nicole shared with SART members that RAINN highlighted policy priorities for the Biden Administration. She provided a brief summary of some of the actions RAINN would like to see the administration prioritize to promote justice and support survivors. For an outline, please visit: [https://www.rainn.org/sites/default/files/12\\_Point\\_Plan\\_12.16.20\\_finalfinal.pdf](https://www.rainn.org/sites/default/files/12_Point_Plan_12.16.20_finalfinal.pdf)

#### **Community Corner:**

*“PBC Community Services Homeless Program and Service Overview”- Paula Bastidas, Caseworker Supervisor, PBC Community Services Department*

Ms. Bastidas provided SART members an overview of the homeless services here in Palm Beach County. She reviewed the agency’s response process as well as links to assist the community with getting in contact with their agency when services are needed for a homeless individual. Ms. Bastidas reviewed the placement process and provided information on local shelters and the services they provide. Please see attached presentation. Any questions or comments can be directed to Paula Bastidas at [PBastida@pbcgov.org](mailto:PBastida@pbcgov.org).

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

Nicole informed SART members that Victim’s Rights week is in April and we normally announce SART member of the year during the luncheon. This year there will not be a luncheon and the SART member of the year will be announced at the April SART meeting.

Alexa Lee, Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition informed SART members that the Coalition has been conducting a survey on non-opioid action due to the opioid crisis. This survey is to assist them with gathering information on the public’s knowledge about options available for pain relief as well as options for post-surgery. Alexa is asking SART Members to participate in the survey. Link to the Community Knowledge Survey on Non-Opioid Choices: <https://research.zarca.com/r/mFTOLL>

**Next meeting date:** April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 2pm-3pm

**Thank you!**

# Community Corner



*Paula Bastidas, MS, CSSYB*  
*Homeless Outreach Supervisor*  
*Palm Beach County Community Services Department*



# Homeless Services

- H.O.T (Homeless Outreach Team) and their purpose/duties
- Assessment Tool used and eligibility
- Acuity list
- Placement in various programs according to eligibility/Diversion, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Rapid-Rehousing (RRH)
- Questions and answers



# Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)

- ▶ Community Street Outreach
- ▶ Calls/Emails from community partners
- ▶ PBSO link online (found middle website under Important Links)  
<https://discover.pbcgov.org/communityservices/Pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ NEW Community website link  
[www.pbcgov.com/hotoutreachform](http://www.pbcgov.com/hotoutreachform)
- ▶ Case Management



## Eligibility

- ▶ Homeless in the street (HUD definition)
- ▶ PBC residency established



## Assessment Tool

- ▶ VI-SPDAT
- ▶ Full SPDAT

### How Does the VI-SPDAT Work (1)?



## Acuity List

# Programs Available

- ▶ Diversion:
  - ▶ Travelers Aid
  - ▶ Reunification friends/family
  - ▶ Connection other services
  
- ▶ Through Coordinated Entry:
  - ▶ Lewis Center / Annex / Pahokee (Shelter)
  - ▶ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
  - ▶ Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

# Questions & Answers

