



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 May 28, 2020

Call to Order:

Carol Messam-Gordon, Program Coordinator, Palm Beach County Victim Services & Certified Rape Crisis Center (PBCVS)

Welcome/Introductions of Members and Guests:

Carol Messam-Gordon welcomed all who were in attendance at the meeting and facilitated introductions.

Review/Approval of minutes: Minutes for April 30th meeting were approved without any changes.

On-Going Business:

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

Lisa provided a report on Sexual Assault Responses for April 2020. There were a total of 16 call outs and 13 forensic exams. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there were 0 non-reporting victims. 10 exams were completed at the Butterfly House.

Child Protection Team Report: Alison Hitchcock, CPT Executive Director

Molly provided child abuse and child sexual abuse CPT case statistics for the months of February through April 2020.

February 2020

- 1,152 Abuse Reports Screened
- 111 Cases Opened
- 248 Services Provided
- 12 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 8 Sexual Assault Kits were completed

March 2020

****10% drop in abuse reports to Abuse Hotline***

- 1,081 Abuse Reports Screened
- 112 Cases Opened
- 239 Services Provided

- 16 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 8 Sexual Assault Kits were completed

April 2020

****50% drop in abuse reports to Abuse Hotline***

- 604 Abuse Reports Screened
- 76 Cases Opened
- 125 Services Provided
- 11 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 rape kit backlog and the timeframe for processing sexual assault kits, the number of kits tested and the number remaining. She also wanted to let us know that crime lab will continue with testing the sexual assault kits, backlog and others. Julie also informed SART members that the Pre SB636 project is close to over.

- ▶ **Reviewed SA cases (pre & post SB 636):** 9,661 (up by 125 cases)
 - ▶ 705 cases pending additional review for possible SA evidence for DNA analysis
 - ▶ 400 are PBSO or merged agencies
 - ▶ 305 are from non-PBSO agencies (PBSO will need to reach out for these agencies to do research)
 - ▶ 958 cases without SAKs sent to SID for additional review
- ▶ **Pre SB636 Cases**
 - ▶ Outsourced for analysis: 1679 (no change)
 - ▶ Profiles entered into CODIS: 845 profiles from 795 cases (up by 3 evidence profiles from 3 additional cases)
 - ▶ From evidence: 732
 - ▶ Suspect samples: 113
 - ▶ CODIS hits (across all agencies): 309 (+2 from the last meeting)
 - ▶ 13 arrests made: 9=PBSO, 4=WPBPD

SART Case Staffing's: Rene Boone, PBCVS SART Supervisor

Rene updated SART members on the most recent sexual assault case staffing held on May 8th. Victim Services' staff reviewed 6 cases and highlighted 4 at the SART meeting. In attendance were Advocates, Coordinator, Team supervisors, and SANEs.

Case 1: Victim was sexually assaulted by suspect in the past and felt she had to push LE into helping her. LE transported her to St. Mary's ER then left her. PBCVS was contacted by ER.

Case 2: Victim is a victim of IPV, has left her safe house, and returned to her abuser. PBCVS advocate will follow up on LE and assist the victim with safety planning and any unmet needs.

Case 3: Victim is 15 yo and had sexual relations with a 19 yo. The victim stated the sex acts were consensual. The victim's mother is upset and feels as though the detective pushing her to not move forward with the case.

Case 4: Victim is 14 yo and there was confusion by LE on who was to complete the forensic exam. CPT/Child protocols were reviewed with team.

Committee Reports:

Community Action Network: Holly Carotenuto, PBCVS Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator

Holly reported that C.A.N. transitioned to having all upcoming and recent events virtually through the month of May. All events will continue to be virtual until further notice. Holly also reported that she is organizing an outreach project in coordination with the Survivor Action Team to create hygiene kits for community members in need. These hygiene kits will include brochures for PBCVS and will be available in English, Spanish, and Creole.

Training Committee: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator

Molly reported that the training committee is currently looking at how to streamline virtual live trainings moving forward. I would love to hear how others are doing virtual live trainings right now. She explained she is am open to ideas and can be contacted after the meeting. The training committee is also connecting with outside agencies such as the Battered Women's Justice Project to find out how they have been executing technical assistance trainings to ensure the SART members in our community are still getting that comprehensive victim-centered training we enjoy bringing in.

Legislative Committee: Teresa Hadjipetrou, Delegation Aide, PBC Legislative Affairs on b/o Rebecca DeLaRosa, Director of PBC Legislative Affairs

No updates at this time - Abby Ross provided legislative updates at the April meeting and the list of bills can be found in the minutes for those who missed it

New Business:

Senate Resolution: Recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month: Carol Messam-Gordon

On May 6th, several senators introduced a bipartisan resolution in support of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. In addition to supporting SAAM, the resolution acknowledges and applauds survivors of sexual assault and the professionals who assist them to heal. The Resolution was attached to the meeting invitation if anyone wants to review.

Title IX Updates: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator

Molly announced that the U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, released the much anticipated changes to Title IX. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding (the vast majority of schools) and also covers the topic of sexual harassment and violence. Schools must dismiss any complaints of sexual misconduct that occur outside of campus-controlled buildings and/or educational activities. Colleges must allow live cross-examination by the trained 'representative' of each party's choosing. This means survivors could be cross-examined by the perpetrator's parents, friends, fraternity brothers or sorority sisters greatly increase the risk of re-traumatization. Mediation will also be allowed in cases of sexual assault, rape, dating violence, and domestic violence. While these are a few of the Title IX changes, campuses are able to establish stricter guidelines.

Community Corner:

Clarice Redding, Director of Community Services for Vita Nova

Clarice Redding provided an overview of the mission and goals of Vita Nova, Inc. Vita Nova is determined to provide a safe place for young adults to get help when they do not have anywhere to turn for school, work, health care, and housing. At Vita Nova, we want to give youth a second chance, at "a new life". Staff is trained and able to provide trauma informed care to youth in their programs.

Vita Nova also offers a location called the Vita Nova Village. The Village is for young adults ages 18-25 and is a housing program for youth who transitioned out of the dependency system or community youth experiencing homelessness. The village teaches participating youth 5 core life skills of: financial literacy, social/emotional health, vocational training, educational planning, and health & wellness. The program fee for the Village is based on a sliding scale.

Clarice also informed SART members that the Vita Nova Thrift Store will be closing and will soon be an entrepreneurial space for you to utilize. Vita Nova offer a variety of additional programs and for more information, Clarice Redding can be contacted via email at: credding@vitanovainc.org

Member field discussion: Carol opened the floor to members to discuss successful collaborations or provide updates. No updates were provided.

Next meeting date: June 25, 2020 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!