



**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 June 27, 2019**

**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 welcomed all who were in attendance at the meeting and gave regards from PBCVS Director, Nicole Bishop.

**Review/Approval of minutes:** Minutes for May 30th meeting was approved without any changes.

**On-Going Business:**

**Start By Believing Campaign: Sharon Daugherty, PBCVS Outreach Coordinator**

Palm Beach County Victim Services has been involved in promoting the Start By Believing Campaign and we are ready to take it to the next level. Sharon shared the mission and importance of the Start By Believing Campaign as well as several accomplishments and future goals for PBCVS.

These initiatives include a 30 minute Start By Believing interview show with Channel 20, collaboration with Florida Atlantic University for on campus trainings, Keiser University pilot program for a campus sensitivity training, and the creation of a podcast, and a train the trainer program for students. Any departments interested in a Start By Believing training can contact Sharon or Molly McConnell (PBCVS).

Carol also announced that PBCVS was invited to meet with Marci Rex, chief of the special victims unit, at the state attorney's office (SAO) where the Start By Believing roll-out campaign was shared. In talks with them, the SAO wanted us to share that they are on board to facilitate case related trainings which would hopefully lead to higher prosecution and conviction rates.

**Laboratory Testing Updates: Julie Sikorsky, Forensic Laboratory Manager, PBSO** *(Update provided during Julie's "Member Highlight" presentation)*

Julie Sikorsky 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.

### **Pre & Post SB636 Cases:**

Reviewed SA cases (pre & post SB 636): 8,800 (+877)

### **Post SB636 Cases**

- Issued 716 screening reports (569 SAKs)
- 813 DNA Reports (647 SAKs)
  - + 125 Y-STR Reports
- Average 86 day TAT (well under the 120 day mandate)

### **Pre SB636 Cases**

- Outsourced for analysis: 1612 (revision after data audit)
  - Reports Received: 1612 reports received (0 outstanding)
- Profiles entered into CODIS: 797 profiles from 728 cases
  - From evidence: 692
  - Suspect samples: 105
  - CODIS hits (across all agencies): 278 (+15)
- 9 arrests made
- Project still on-going to review cases without SAKs

### **New Business:**

**HIV Prophylaxis Medication Changes and Process: Carol Messam-Gordon, Program Coordinator, (PBCVS); Eddie Sweet, Pharmacy Specialist, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)**

Carol announced the new partnership between PBCVS and AHF to provide victims of sexual assault with HIV prophylaxis medications at no cost to the victim. Eddie was present to provide more information about AHF including their services such as free shipping of medications, free one-minute HIV testing, and case management services, along with many other supportive services.

**2019 Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator (PBCVS)**

Molly presented on hers and Carol's recent trip to Minneapolis, MN for the SART Leader's National Conference. Molly brought back information regarding the importance of remaining survivor focused and to do this she read three survivor quotes. Survivor quotes is something that will be integrated into future SART meetings. Molly also had several SART members participate in presenting "SARTners" by reading off "super powers" and other information for advocacy, law enforcement, and health professionals.

**Member Highlight: Julie Sikorsky, Forensic Laboratory Manager, PBSO**

Julie provided a detailed explanation of the role of the forensic lab and the forensic processing of Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs). Julie explained the types of testing that can be performed on a SAK, how a SAK testing request is submitted, how results are read, the successes and opportunities

forensic labs have faced as a result of SB636, and how CODIS is used for forensic samples. Julie also shared that since the passage of SB 636 in 2016, there has been a 570% increase in SAK requests.

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

Nicole introduced Lisa to members as the new SANE Program Coordinator. Lisa reported that there were fifteen call outs and thirteen forensic exams in May. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there was one non-reporting victims. Eight exams were completed at the Butterfly House. Lisa also shared information regarding her recent training for Advanced Clinical Skills in Georgia where only a few SANEs were able to attend and practice evidence collection on live models.

**Community Action Network: Sharon Daugherty, PBCVS Outreach Coordinator**

Sharon discussed the Sexual Assault Services Community Needs Assessment for Palm Beach County. CAN met & discussed pressing community issues including sexual assault survivors facing homelessness, low attendance in public support groups, and issues facing transgender survivors.

Sharon also shared Survivor Action Team's completion of a 30 minute interview highlighting the Start By Believing campaign. Survivor Action Team's mission and integration into SART was also highlighted at a recent conference Sharon and Nicole (PBCVS Director) attended in Vail, CO at the where Sharon and Nicole presented on engaging and empowering survivors.

Survivor Action Team is planning and putting on Media Appreciation Day in August. They are planning to highlight the media entities who RSVP in a presentation of their coverage. At this event, reporters will also be made aware of current projects and initiatives.

**Training Committee: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator**

Training Committee met on June 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at SART. Four law enforcement departments were represented at this committee meeting where the intersection of gender bias and law enforcement response to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence was discussed. The training topic will be expanded to meet the need of law enforcement. Any members interested in attending should notify Molly to be put on the committee list.

**Legislative Committee: Shawn Hall, Legislative Aide to Sen Berman & Victoria Nowlan, Executive Director PBC Legislative Delegation**

Shawn spoke to the upcoming committee meetings which will start in September and legislative action will resume in January 2020. Both Shawn and Victoria expressed the urgency of bringing legislative issues to the Legislative Delegation and local representatives now as the working calendar year for legislators is coming up shortly. Petition for Certain Protective Injunctions (SB 980/HB 845) (this passed the House and is on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading here in the Senate)

**SART Case Staffing's:** Valerie Messineo, PBCVS Team Supervisor

Valerie reported that two cases were staffed. The first involved a case where a victim went to a local ER stating she was the victim of a sexual assault. It is the hospital's protocol to report this to law enforcement. The victim told the officer she didn't want to report. They determined the jurisdiction was of another department. A deputy from that department arrived at the hospital to meet with the victim and she stated that she did not want to report but wanted a kit collected. She was transported to the Butterfly House where an advocate and SANE provided support and collected a kit. Law enforcement opened a case for the victim and had her sign a waiver of prosecution rather than explaining her non-reporting options. There were further miscommunications between the SANE, the advocate, and the officer about the case, how it would proceed, and what would happen with the collected kit. We spoke about how we can better communicate and how hospital policies may need to be shifted to allow the victims to have a better understanding of his/her reporting options before law enforcement is contacted. We will continue to work on this topic.

The next case involved a child who reported being sexually abused by her father 3 years ago. DCF investigated and unfounded the allegations. The victim is now in therapy and we were contacted by her therapist. The victim is displaying sexualized coping skills in the school and disclosed additional sexually inappropriate behaviors by her father. DCF was notified and interviewed the victim. They did not note any new allegations from the victim and therefore did not reopen their case initially. The advocate wants to determine the best way to support the victim and try to keep her safe.

**Green DOT Program update:** Clarice Redding, VS Green Dot Program Coordinator  
Clarice shared that June has been Green Dot Action Month where she thanked any members who have participated in the month's events.

**Member field discussion:** Carol opened the floor to members to discuss successful collaborations or provide updates. Lucas Hall announced that Compass has a new Trans Youth Group that is held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month and invited members to support Compass' three-part medical seminar on transgender care on July 27, 2019. Lucas also highlighted a Youth Wellness Event at Compass on July 19, 2019. Compass materials were made available to SART members.

**Next meeting date:** August 29, 2019 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!