



**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, August 27, 2020**

### **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 of July SART Meeting:** Nicole informed SART members that our July SART Meeting was used to announce the 2019 SART Member of the Year winner, Julie Sikorsky. Julie is the Forensic Laboratory Manager with PBSO and has been an invaluable asset to our SART in ensuring victims' stories are told through the criminal justice system. Congratulations, Julie!

### **New Business:** *Video Submission by Senator Lauren Book*

Nicole announced that our SART meeting had some very special guests for Teen Talk Week. Florida Council Against Sexual Violence challenged Florida SARTs to engage youth in our community. PBCVS Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator, Holly Lynn Carotenuto, invited selected teen leaders to observe and learn what they can do to prevent sexual violence in Palm Beach County and see how our SART team operates.

Senator Lauren Book (District 32) was kind enough to send over a video to talk to our teen leaders about how they can be active in their communities to help prevent sexual violence. Senator Book commended Palm Beach County SART on the great work we do and inspired local teen leaders to pursue careers that will help strengthen their communities.

To see the video, please click on the link below:

[Senator Lauren Book Video](#)

### **Community Corner: Meet SART - A Refresher**

*Sgt Juliana Martinez, Special Investigations Division, PBSO; Rene Boone, SART Supervisor, PBCVS; Brianna Coakley, SAO SVU Chief*

Community Corner speakers provided a walkthrough of the SART process when responding to victims of sexual assault in Palm Beach County. Sgt Martinez reviewed the Helpline and investigative protocol and procedure for law enforcement. Rene explained the purpose and responsibilities of victim advocates including their role during a sexual assault case. Finally, Brianna provided a summary of the role of a prosecutor including how their team interacts with

victims, what their expectations of investigations are, and what their process is in the criminal justice system.

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

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

Lisa provided a report on Sexual Assault Responses for June and July 2020. For June there was a total of 20 call outs and 19 forensic exams. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there was 1 non-reporting victim. 15 exams were completed at the Butterfly House. For July there was a total of 20 call outs and 18 forensic exams. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there was 1 non-reporting victim. 15 exams were completed at the Butterfly House.

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

Alison provided child abuse and child sexual abuse CPT case statistics for June and July 2020. Alison also reviewed the role of CPT to SART members and explained that sexual abuse is a small percentage of cases that CPT receives.

### **June 2020**

- 798 Abuse Reports Screened
- 89 Cases Opened
- 111 Services Provided
- 16 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 5 Sexual Assault Kits were completed

### **July 2020**

- 806 Abuse Reports Screened
- 89 Cases Opened
- 182 Services Provided
- 20 Sexual Abuse Forensic Medical Exams were completed
- 5 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. Julie's team is still in process of reviewing Pre SB 636 cases. They also applied for grant funding to outsource cases for additional testing and received approval for a GAN for the 2019 Paul Coverdale grant, giving them an additional \$22,984 to spend on pre-SB 636 case analysis.

- ▶ **Reviewed SA cases (pre & post SB 636):** 9,864 (+169 cases since last meeting)
  - ▶ 9,031 analyzed or do not need analysis
  - ▶ 100 identified to be outsourced
  - ▶ 734 (+28) cases pending additional review for possible SA evidence for DNA analysis
    - ▶ 429 (+28) are 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 for analysis: 1,679 (no change)
  - ▶ Profiles entered into CODIS: 845 profiles from 795 cases (no change)
    - ▶ From evidence: 732
    - ▶ Suspect samples: 113
  - ▶ CODIS hits (across all agencies): 311 (+2 since last meeting)
  - ▶ 13 arrests made: 9=PBSO, 4=WPBPD (no change)

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

Rene updated SART members on the most recent sexual assault case staffing held on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Victim Services' staff reviewed 5 cases. In attendance were Advocates, Coordinator, Team supervisors, and SANEs.

Case 1: Victim has mental health/alcohol issues and the suspect has broken into her home several times. The last time he sexually assaulted victim. Detective Joseph may have possible suspect. Victim was looking into doing sexual assault Relocation. Victim is presently in treatment facility.

Case 2: Victim was sexually assaulted by ex-boyfriend. Victim was having difficulties dealing with the assault and a hard time completing forensic exam due to panic attacks. The detective looked into doing a controlled call while awaiting the SAK results. The victim is in therapy with PBCVS.

Case 3: Sexual assault/DCF Case – Mother and children rented room from Suspect – Suspect sexually assaulted – family needed emergency placement and PBCVS assisted family while being assisted by DCF to locate more permanent housing.

Case 4: Victim was sexually assault by Supervisor at her new job – the victim was scared and confused and opted to do Non Reporting SAK. After having time to feel safe and talking with advocate, the victim has now reported the case to law enforcement.

Case 5: Victim met suspect at a restaurant in Deerfield Beach. The victim may have been drugged and doesn't remember a lot about what happened. The victim woke up in her car in Palm Beach County near Ocean Ave and is considering reporting.

**Committee Reports:**

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

Holly reported that C.A.N. met on August 26<sup>th</sup> and are actively looking for new outreach events. Holly is looking to start planning the annual Hispanic Outreach event held at St. John Fischer's Church. C.A.N. will create both virtual and drive-thru plans based on the COVID-19 climate by that time. Holly reviewed the events that were planned for Teen Talk Week and thanked the various SART members who have assisted her. Holly is planning on participating on a webinar for consent with the Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition.

Legislative Committee: PBC Legislative Delegation & Abby Ross, Legislative Aide for Sen Berman  
Abby Ross provided an update regarding the next legislative session. Legislators are transitioning to an organizational session and Abby is accepting ideas for bill drafts. Some planning has been put on hold as upcoming election outcomes will determine some of the priorities and processes.

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

**Next meeting date:** September 24, 2020 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!