



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, October 29th, 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/Approval of Minutes: Minutes for September 24th 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 September 2020. SANEs responded to 17 calls and conducted 15 forensic exams. In the total call-outs, there were 2 non-reporting victims. 12 exams were completed at the Butterfly House and 3 were completed at a local Palm Beach County Hospital ER. There have been 153 SANE exams thus far for 2020. Lisa also shared that she has visited local hospitals and reviewed the SART process with the nurses. She also provided them with updated brochures, posters, and ID tags. The SANEs completed a photography training and a webinar on strangulation. Lisa reminded SART members that the advocates are responding to the hospitals and other locations.

Nicole informed the SART members that our numbers for October were low and she reminded everyone that advocates are available to respond 24/7 to provide support to victims.

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

Alison informed SART members that CPT also had a low number of cases for October. She provided child abuse and child sexual abuse CPT case statistics for September 2020. Alison reported that there has been an increase in abuse reports since August 2020. She reported that since the opening of schools, the hotline has seen an increase in reported cases.

September 2020

- 1167 Abuse Reports Screened
- 122 Cases Opened
- 227 Services Provided
- 16 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. Julie's team is still reviewing Pre SB 636 cases. She also stated that the Forensic biology unit is moving to a new building and will not be fully operational until mid-January. They will be accepting sexual assault kits, however, they cannot test these kits until they are fully operational in their new space.

- ▶ Crime Lab sent to SID for review:
 - ▶ 958 cases without SAKs to SID for additional review (older cases)
 - ▶ SID has completed the review of 453 cases, 505 remaining (down 118 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:
 - ▶ 25 Post SB 636 cases without a SAK
 - ▶ 15 Post SB 636 cases with a SAK
- ▶ Total SA cases reviewed (pre & post SB 636): 10,252 (up 132 cases)
 - ▶ 9,241 analyzed or do not need analysis (up 79 cases)
 - ▶ 127 identified to be outsourced (up 25 cases)
 - ▶ 15 identified to be processed in-house with *Rapid DNA analysis*
 - ▶ 78 requested to be processed in-house (screening/DNA) (up 29 cases)
 - ▶ 22 Other pending (up 3 cases)
 - ▶ 789 cases pending additional review for possible SA evidence for DNA analysis
 - ▶ 484 (up 15 cases) 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): 311 (no change)
 - ▶ 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 held on October 9th. Three cases were staffed. In attendance were Advocates, Coordinators, Team supervisors, and SANEs.

- Case 1: A white female was found hanging out on the steps outside the PBCVS SART Center. Victim Services SART Center Supervisor and advocates became concerned and put together a care package for her. The following day they presented her with the care package and inquired about her wellbeing. After speaking with her the staff noticed red flags and that she may be a victim of Human Trafficking. They immediately contacted and staffed the case with the PBCVS Human Trafficking Coordinator. After a review of the case, it was determined that she was in fact a victim of Human Trafficking, and she was

immediately linked with the PBC Human Trafficking Task Force. An interview was conducted at the SART Center. The victim was provided with food and transportation to a safe shelter. Great teamwork, care, and advocacy on behalf of this victim.

- Case 2: Hospital called in stating that a victim was requesting a SAK. The victim was reported as a Missing Person by her family. This victim reported that she came to Palm Beach County to meet up with friends she met on Social Media. While with her friends, her car broke down & they left her. The victim got in touch with a male friend, who picked her up & took her to his brother's home and left her there. The victim said that an unknown male showed up, locked her in a room, and told her his money was taken and he expected her to work for him. The victim reported that at some point she fell asleep and was later let out of the room by a child. The victim said she was able to get away and contacted her mother. The victim said after talking with her mother she felt something might have happened to her & she went to the hospital & then to the Butterfly House. Law enforcement was involved and after they spoke to her they told her that they would take her phone to get additional information. The victim did not want her phone to be taken and decided to not follow through with reporting. Victim requesting to do a Non-Reporting Exam. An advocate was instructed to follow-up with the victim to see how she was doing, offer medical follow-up and services.
- Case 3: Two law enforcement departments went back and forth over who had jurisdiction on this case because the victim was not clear on where she was assaulted. One department took the sexual assault kit and the other department transported the victim. The victim spoke Creole and a Creole officer responded and conducted the fact-finding. No detective was available to do the taped statement. At the case staffing, the advocate reported that she was not aware of a detective being assigned to the case. Advocate was instructed to make contact with the victim, provide support, and offer medical follow-up. The advocate was also instructed to contact law enforcement for updates regarding the status of the case.

Committee Reports:

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

Holly reported that C.A.N. met on Wednesday, October 28th. She stated that they have started planning for Sexual Assault Awareness Month which is in April 2021. They have two plans in place; either in-person events or virtual events/drive-by events. As plans are set, SART members will be updated about the dates, times, and locations for each of the events. Holly also informed the SART members that St. John Fischer outreach will be held in January. Due to COVID, the event will be a little different. She is currently working with the Secretary from the church and Detective Vertefeuille of the West Palm Beach Police Department to finalize the event.

Training Committee: Kristen Ferguson, PBCVS Grant Coordinator

Kristen informed SART members that the training committee meeting was held on Tuesday, October 27th. She stated that the committee members provided valuable input on training needs. They discussed creating a training survey to hear from SART members and the community. The training survey will be sent out on November 15th and will be closed on December 15th. The next

training committee meeting will be on February 23rd, 2021 and the result of the survey will be discussed.

Legislative Committee: PBC Legislative Delegation & Abby Ross, Legislative Aide for Sen Berman
Abby informed the SART members that her office has been working with Cohen Milstein in regards to obtaining the language needed for the case involving the anonymity of the FAMU student's. She stated that she recently submitted the paperwork to bill drafting. Abby also informed everyone that they will be able to file bills in the next few weeks once the organizational session happens in Tallahassee which will be on November 17th.

New Business:

"Stop Sexual Harassment in K-12 Act"- Felicia Goldstein, District Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Lois Frankel

<https://www.floridadaily.com/lois-frankel-backs-sean-castens-stop-sexual-harassment-in-k-12-act/>

Ms. Goldstein provided an update on the "Stop sexual harassment in K-12" bill. She informed SART Members that unfortunately people were unfamiliar with the Title IX policy and that it applied to K-12 grade students. She also said there has been a lot of conversation about the prevalence of sexual harassment in school-aged students. Many students who were being sexually harassed were unaware even when they were asked to explain the sexual harassment. Parents often had a difficult time assisting their children because the information they shared often got lost in translation. Parents are sometimes unaware that their child may be describing a sexual encounter, therefore they may not take the necessary actions to report it.

This new bill would:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the Title IX coordinator in all K-12 schools.
- It would set constraints on how many coordinators a school district should have to ensure proper coverage for their student body.
- Prevent people with a conflict of interest to serve in that position, for example, the principal.
- Encourages confidential reporting of sexual assault, so that students are not deterred from seeking help.
- Provides training to students and teachers about what to do if they see or experience Title IX violations.
- Creates national climate surveys where better data is collected and how often harassment and assault are occurring.
- Ensures that training, surveys, and processes are age-appropriate for each grade level.
- Provides funding to schools to help them meet these standards.

They are looking forward to moving forward with this bill. They have received a lot of support from members for this bill, but not a lot of support from the department of education secretary. She stated that after the election, they hope to see a change take place and that the leaders on the federal level will understand how important this issue is.

Community Corner:

Speaker was unable to attend due to an emergency.

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

Kristen (PBCVS) stated that the SART October Newsletter was completed and everyone will receive a digital copy within the next week. She also asked SART members to share the newsletter with others in their agency for them to see the amazing work that the members on our SART team are doing.

Victoria Nowlan (Executive Director from PBC Legislative Delegation) stated that Rebecca De La Rosa, Director of Legislative Affairs is no longer with the county. Assistant County Administrator, Todd Bonlarron and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Engagement, Ed Chase are currently sharing the role of Director of Legislative Affairs until a new director is hired. Victoria encouraged SART members to reach out to either her or Ed Chase if assistance or legislative updates are needed. EChase@pbcgov.org or Vnowlan@pbcgov.org

Next meeting date: November 19th, 2020 2 pm-3 pm

Thank you!