



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 31, 2019

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 26th meeting were approved without any changes.

On-Going Business:

Laboratory Testing Updates: *Nicole Bishop, PBCVS Director & Molly McConnell, PBCVS Grant Coordinator on behalf of Julie Sikorsky, Forensic Laboratory Manager, PBSO*

Nicole Bishop and Molly McConnell 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.

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- Pre SB636 Cases
 - Outsourced for analysis: 1679
 - Profiles entered into CODIS: 823 profiles from 774 cases (No changes since September's meeting)
 - From evidence: 714
 - Suspect samples: 109
 - CODIS hits (across all agencies): 295 (+2 from September's meeting)
 - 11 arrests made (+2 from September – 7=PBSO, 4=WPBPD)
 - 3 additional cases have been filed since September's Meeting
 - Project still on-going to review cases without SAKs

Mock SART Response Training: *Molly McConnell, Grant Coordinator, PBCVS*

Molly McConnell updated SART members on the Mock SART Response Training held on October 16, 2019. The purpose of this training is to support sexual assault victims through a victim centered approach through crisis response, advocacy and the criminal justice process. The case scenario highlighted a domestic violence case with a sexual assault component between an interracial same-sex couple played by PBCVS staff. Approximately 33 law enforcement officers were present and participated in the training. For the Mock Training, Marci Rex, Chief of the Special Victims Unit at the SAO came and presented as well as provided a nice wrap up and answered questions from the audience. PBCVS is planning on having another Mock Training in February of next year that will be open to Law Enforcement and Community Partners.

New Business: Nicole Bishop, Director, PBCVS

Senate Bill 170 - Bill to Remove Statute of Limitations for Child Victims of Sexual Assault

Nicole provided information regarding a legislative bill that will be considered in 2020. Senate Bill 170 was re-filed by Senator Linda Stewart (Orlando) and is gaining support. This bill will close a loophole for minors aged 16 and 17 that currently only have that three year window to report the crime. Senate Bill 170 also removes sexual battery reporting time limitations for all persons under the ages 15 – 18. Copies of the bill were distributed to SART members.

Member Highlight: Jon Burstein, Senior Communications Specialist – Children’s Services Council of PBC

Jon Burstein provided an overview of the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County to SART members. Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County is an independent special district established by Palm Beach County voters in 1986. Today, The Council provides leadership, funding and research on behalf of Palm Beach County’s children, so they are born healthy, growing up safe and ready to learn when they enter school. The Council funds 55 programs throughout PBC and serves more than 70,000 children and families annually.

They are dedicated to ensuring our community’s children are: born healthy, safe from abuse and neglect, ready to learn when they enter kindergarten, and have access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Jon highlighted a few of their programs such as Healthy Beginnings, BRIDGES, Strong Minds Network, Safe Kids PBC, EveryParent Campaign and the Drowning Prevention Coalition of PBC. Many of their programs are free or low-cost for families.

SANE Report: Molly McConnell, PBCVS Grant Coordinator on behalf of Lisa Alward, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Coordinator PBCVS

Molly provided a report on Sexual Assault Responses for the month of September 2019. There were 24 call outs and 23 forensic exams. SANEs responded to all cases. In the total call outs there were 2 non-reporting victims. 16 exams were completed at the Butterfly House.

Community Action Network: Carol Messam-Gordon, PBCVS Program Coordinator

Carol updated SART members on the October C.A.N. Meeting where planning for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) for April 2020 will begin shortly. Day of Action for SAAM 2020 will be April 7, 2020. Carol highlighted the upcoming Zonta Fundraiser. Jane Adams and her team have

asked SART members to mark their calendars for January 25, 2020 benefitting the “Not Just Me Foundation”, Women’s Circle, and several scholarships.

Training Committee: Molly McConnell, Victim Services Grant Coordinator

Molly reported that the Training Committee will start planning for the next Mock SART Response training to develop course material and select a date. Molly explained that anyone interested in joining the committee can see Molly and be added. Carol Messam-Gordon highlighted the importance of participation in this committee and encouraged SART members to play an active role in it. The next meeting will be November 19, 2-3p.

SOFT ANNOUNCEMENT – Mark your calendars! Molly featured a training announcement for a Response to Stalking Cases training. The training will be facilitated by SPARC (Stalking Prevention and Awareness Resource Center) associated with Aequitas. SPARC is leading the nation in training allied professionals to better identify and respond to crimes of stalking. This training will take place on Friday January 31, 2020 at PBSO Training Facility on Cherry Rd. the training is a full 8 hour course and will be open to Law Enforcement as well as current professionals in the field.

Legislative Committee: Nicole Bishop, PBCVS Director

Nicole highlighted Senate Bill 170 for “New Business” which was provided by the Legislative Committee.

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

Carol reported on October 11th, PBCVS had a sexual assault case staffing at the SART Center. In attendance were advocates, Coordinators, team supervisor and the SANE Nurse Coordinator where 2 cases were staffed.

The first case involved a victim who met a guy on tinder and agreed to have consensual sex with him at her home. Victim engaged in consensual vaginal sex with the suspect and suspect had anal sex with the victim against her will. The forensic exam was conducted at the hospital with the afterhours advocate and victim was too exhausted to complete a taped statement. The detective assigned contacted the assigned advocate to let her know that she was conducting the interview the following day and an advocate was not needed. Responding advocate and detective were not available for the case staffing and case will be rescheduled to be staffed at a later date.

The next case involved a child victim who was assaulted on a cruise ship on international waters. Advocate and SANE were concerned that the suspect was unknown to the victim, STD and HIV medications were necessary and was not prescribed to this victim. All involved was uncertain about medication procedure when a prescribing physician is not on site with a high risk case where medication should be prescribed. After the case staffing, Program Coordinator contacted Program Administrator and medication procedure was clarified and will be reviewed with SANE Nurse who will be conducting forensic exams on minor victims.

Green DOT Program: NO UPDATE

Member field discussion: Nicole opened the floor to members to discuss successful collaborations or provide updates. Lucas O’Ryan, Transgender Youth Program Coordinator at Compass Community Center, gave information to SART members regarding their upcoming Transgender Day of Remembrance event. The event will be on November 20, 2019 at 6 p.m. and will be located at the PBSC Belle Glade Campus. This event will also pay tribute to Pahokee local Bee Love Slater who was a transgender woman and is a homicide victim. Lucas also stated that Compass’ quarterly mail out will be sent soon which lists Compass’ upcoming events.

Stephanie Sejnoha, PBC Public Safety Department Director, highlighted a recent collaboration between PBCVS and 911 where Carol Messam-Gordon provided a training to 911 managers and supervisors on the importance of a victim-centered approach as well as what is important for sexual assault victims to know when trying to preserve evidence when dispatchers receive 911 calls. This collaboration sparked from hearing the keynote survivor speak at this year’s Regional SART where the speaker explained the positive impact the 911 operator she spoke with after assault had on her and evidence preservation in her criminal case.

Next meeting date: November 21, 2019 @ 2pm – 3pm

Thank you!