

**Palm Beach County
Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)**

PART 1: Hospital Protocol for Sexual Assault (SANE Response)

- I. PURPOSE:
To provide guidelines for the management of patients reporting sexual assault; arrange for and rendering appropriate medical services as needed; provide information and referral to The Butterfly House, a forensic rape exam center managed by Palm Beach County Victim Services.
- II. SCOPE:
Emergency Department.
- III. RESPONSIBILITY:
It is the responsibility of the Director of the Emergency Department to disseminate this information to the Charge Nurse and Supervisor for distribution to the ED personnel.
- IV. POLICY:
 1. All patients are screened for possible abuse upon arrival to the Emergency Department. When the patient indicates that a sexual assault is the reason for the visit, Palm Beach County's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) will be activated by contacting the Victim Services Rape hotline, 561-833-7273. SART members include an advocate, a law enforcement officer (**ONLY** if victim chooses to report a crime) and a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE).
 2. The ER personnel will determine if immediate medical care is necessary or if the patient can be medically cleared and potentially referred to The Butterfly House for the forensic rape exam. If patient requests assistance from law enforcement, the hospital will notify the law enforcement jurisdiction where assault occurred or the jurisdiction of hospital.
 3. If the patient cannot or prefers not to be referred to The Butterfly House, a SANE will be dispatched to the emergency room to perform the forensic rape exam (SANE staff are contracted with Victim Services).
- V. PROCEDURE:
 1. Patient will be assessed and treated for any life threatening injuries on presentation to the Emergency Room. Charge Nurse will be notified of the sexual assault and facilitate calling the rape hotline (561-833-7273) for an Advocate's assistance if not already present. Charge Nurse will also facilitate calling law enforcement if not already present, at the request of the victim.
 2. In order to preserve forensic evidence, care must be taken. The patient's clothing should remain on, if possible. Urine should be collected by the SANE, but if the patient must urinate prior to the SANE's arrival, collect a urine sample.

3. Recognizing that the patient suffering from a sexual assault has experienced an emotionally and physically traumatizing experience, all possible efforts will be made to provide patient with emotional support throughout their stay. The patient will be informed of forensic rape exam services available at The Butterfly House. If patient needs transportation, law enforcement will coordinate or, if patient is a non-reporting victim, the Hospital or the Advocate should coordinate transportation to The Butterfly House.
4. If patient cannot or prefers not to be referred to The Butterfly House, the SANE will respond to the ER. The ER staff will provide the necessary medical care and charting while the SANE will be responsible for performing the forensic rape exam, collection of evidence and forensic charting.
5. If the SANE is not available, the Advocate will provide information about the collection process and a sealed Sexual Battery Evidence Collection Kit to the Emergency Room Physician and Nurse.
6. The SANE has a prophylactic medication protocol available to the Emergency Room Physician that will assist in selecting medications for treatment and prevention of the STDs and pregnancy based on CDC guidelines.