

**MINUTES**  
**Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee**  
**January 13, 2021**

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee met via Microsoft Teams from 2:00 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.

**Members in Attendance:** Linda J. Cimino, Edith Atwerebour, Dr. Alexis Cordiano, Denise Covington, Marielle Daniels, Heather Deming, Beth Hamilton, Brittany Kaplan, Kristin Loranger, Sharmese Walcott

**Members Excused or Absent:** Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno, Natasha Pierre

**OVS Staff in Attendance:** Jean M. Weisbrod

**Guests in Attendance:** Alison Chandler, Denise Poncini

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda J. Cimino called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Linda reported that Kristin Sasinouski resigned from the committee, due to a change as she left state service.

Linda introduced new council member, Sharmese Walcott, State's Attorney for the Hartford Judicial District and the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations.

Linda welcomed ongoing attendee Denise Poncini, Judicial Branch Office of Legal Services to the meeting.

2. Approval of November 16, 2020, meeting minutes

Linda asked for a motion to accept the minutes of November 16, 2020. The motion was moved and seconded and the minutes were approved as presented.

3. Information provided to sexual assault patients (continued)

An update will be provided at a future meeting.

4. Update on the revision of the pamphlet by Department of Public Health

Edith Atwerebour discussed several possible revisions to the pamphlet which included the size, language translations, QR codes that lead to websites, and the quantity of hard copies. She reported that she has met with several vendors to discuss these issues.

Committee members discussed issues related to ways to provide consistent information to victims of sexual assault regardless of where they seek treatment and support services.

5. Update on the template of the list of SAFEs

Denise Covington reported that the clinical component of the Fall training class has been rescheduled for late February and the first half of March. Denise reported that the Spring training class dates have been confirmed. She stated that the template is slated to be available once the clinical training is completed which allows for the list to be up-to-date. The regular schedule to update the template will be resumed in July to include the Spring 2021 class.

6. SAFE Practice in CT

Denise Covington reported that in December 2020 she became aware that Hartford Hospital was in the process of applying for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant. Linda, Denise, and Dr. Alexis Cordiano engaged in discussion expressing concern over implications regarding the HRSA training grant. Discussions included a meeting between Hartford Hospital Administration and OVS on January 25, 2021. Committee members discussed issues related to the HRSA training grant.

Denise reported that since the beginning of the fiscal year the response rate was 82% with 100 activations. She stated that in the same time frame last year the response rate was 72.3% with 136 activations. Denise reported that the differences can be attributed to a decrease in cases as a result of COVID-19.

Denise reported that there were 27 SAFEs in the Program in 2020, however, with the cancellation of the Fall clinical trainings, combined with the attrition rate that began in the Fall, the staffing is currently numbered at 20 SAFEs.

Denise reported that nearly 50% of the SAFEs have volunteered to be involved with a strategic planning committee that is being internally formed to focus on marketing, recruitment, and how to grow the Program statewide.

7. SAFE Training Program Update

Patricia Moriarty will provide an update at a future meeting.

8. New Business

Linda recognized the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SAFE Program and thanked Denise Covington for her leadership.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder