

MINUTES
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee
September 9, 2020

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee met via Microsoft Teams from 2:00 p.m. to 3:05 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Linda J. Cimino, Edith Atwerebour, Denise Covington, Marielle Daniels, Heather Deming, Beth Hamilton, Brittany Kaplan, Sarah Martino-Kelley, Natasha Pierre

Members Excused or Absent: Dr. Alexis Cordiano, Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno, DNP, Maureen Platt, Kristin Sasinouski

OVS Staff in Attendance: Patricia Moriarty, Jean M. Weisbrod

Guests in Attendance: Alison Chandler, Thomas MacLean

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
Chair Linda J. Cimino called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.
2. Approval of March 11, 2020, meeting minutes
Linda asked for a motion to accept the minutes of March 11, 2020. The motion was moved and seconded and the minutes were accepted as presented. Marielle Daniels abstained because she was not present at the March 11, 2020 meeting.
3. Information provided to sexual assault patients (continued)
Linda reviewed the discussion from the March 11, 2020, meeting on standardizing informational materials provided to sexual assault patients by emergency department staff.

Members discussed the status of the revising of the Sexual Assault and STDs brochure funded by the Department of Public Health. Further discussion included possible options of developing an application (app) or a link to be included on the informational materials.

Members discussed issues related to informational materials the participating hospitals versus non participating hospitals distribute to patients at the time of discharge from the emergency departments.

Members discussed the option of creating an electronic survey versus the hard copy survey that is returned to and reviewed by the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

Members discussed several options to provide patients with electronic information regarding services which would replace the hard copies of information that a patient currently receives at discharge from the emergency department.

4. Update on vote to waive annual competency requirement

Linda reported that on July 28, 2020, Chief Court Administrator, Judge Patrick Carroll, approved the Committee's recommendation which waived the 2020 SAFE competency requirement and extended the certification date until 2021. New certifications have not been issued yet.

5. SAFE Practice in CT

Denise reported that she met with a SANE-A Board certified nurse from out-of-state to review State of CT Technical Guidelines and CT evidence collection processes, in accordance with the Advisory Committee recommendation. The SANE-A found the review to be very beneficial as there were significant differences in SAFE practice.

Members discussed the suggestion that a list of CT trained SAFEs be created and it was met with approval. It was agreed to format the list in alphabetical order by the name of the SAFE and it will be updated in January and July of each year. It was stated that the list will include statutory language as framework for the list. Also, it was agreed that the list will include referral information to the SAFE Program Manager for nurses who use the SANE or SAFE title on their resume that travel or relocate to Connecticut. Discussion also included options for posting and distributing the list.

Denise reported that there are 20-25 nurses who are applying to the fall training program with 5 of them joining the SAFE Program. Denise stated that there was a positive response from hospitals to participate in the training despite the COVID pandemic. Denise reported first time commitments from the following hospitals to send nurses to participate in the training:

- Backus Hospital
- Bridgeport Hospital
- Danbury Hospital
- Norwalk Hospital

6. SAFE Training Program Update

Pat reported that hospital staff that have undergone SAFE training through OVS have been invited to ongoing training opportunities and have responded positively to the monthly virtual SAFE QA meetings.

The meeting topics include:

- July 22, 2020: Legal Perspectives
- August 20, 2020: Vicarious Trauma
- September 14, 2020: Medical Examiner Findings

Pat reported that the fall SAFE training didactic portion will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams beginning October 5, 2020. Pat stated that the clinical portion will be in person at a local clinic with COVID-19 precaution requests which the class will abide with as well as have students and clinical models sign COVID-19 waivers.

Denise acknowledged that Pat organized the upcoming training in the virtual environment and thanked her for her contributions to the SAFE Program.

Denise provided an overview of the demands on the SAFE Program during the pandemic. She stated the overall number of cases decreased but the number of domestic violence related injuries coupled with sexual assault are on the rise.

Members discussed trends in the increased number of domestic violence incidents and how the service provider agencies are combining efforts to serve patients.

7. New Business

Linda stated that the November 16, 2020, meeting topics will include updates on discharge information packets, the fall training class, revision of the pamphlet by the Department of Public Health brochure, and a template of the list of SAFEs.

Linda adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder