

MINUTES
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee
October 28, 2019

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, Fourth Floor, Room 4B, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Linda J. Cimino, Dr. Alexis Cordiano, Denise Covington, Marielle Daniels, Beth Hamilton, Brittany Kaplan, Mary Nielson, Natasha Pierre, Maureen Platt, Dr. Guy Vallaro

Members Excused or Absent: Edith Atwerebour, Heather Deming, Dr. Stephanie Paulmeno, DNP

OVS Staff Present: Pat Moriarty, Jean M. Weisbrod

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Linda J. Cimino called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and members introduced themselves.

Linda asked for a motion to accept the minutes of September 5, 2019. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.

2. Report of SAFE Program Status

Denise Covington reported that the SAFE Program has 25 SAFEs, with another 4 in training.

Denise reported on the recruiting and application process for the SAFE Program;

- Purchasing, the contractual division of the Judicial Branch, posts a Request for Interest (RFI) on the Judicial Branch website twice a year, December and June, for an individual to apply for the SAFE Program.
- When the RFI submission timeline closes a list of those who have applied is provided to the SAFE Program Manager and interviews are then scheduled.
- There is a 10-week time frame during which the applicants have to accept the Award letters and submit a number of requirements.

Denise stated that 31 SAFEs are needed to cover a 31-day month and the current number is 25. She also stated that attrition is largely due to SAFEs returning to school or other life changes. The immediate goal in 2020 is to build capacity through the Training Program.

3. Report of Training Program Manager
Pat Moriarty reported on the Fall 2019 SAFE Training Program which completed on October 17, 2019.

Pat stated that the 42 hours of didactic training included the following topics and speaker examples;

- o Defense attorney
- o State's Attorney's Office
- o Department of Children and Families
- o Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- o Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- o The Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Program at Connecticut Children's
- o Attorney specializing in HIPAA
- o Law Enforcement
- o Vicarious Trauma
- o Neurobiology of Trauma
- o Tour of the Division of Scientific Services Forensic Laboratory

Pat reported that 22 students received their certification and had different backgrounds and training experiences for sexual assault care. She stated that the students agreed that they learned much more with the hands on approach of this course.

Pat reported on the Clinical Training evening and day sessions and the mock exams planned for the upcoming weeks. She stated that the Spring SAFE Training Program begins March 23, 2020.

4. Review of Forensic Evidence Collection line item
Linda distributed and reported on the *Office of Victim Services Forensic Evidence Collection Reimbursement FY 07/01/18 – 06/30/19 Expenses*.

Description	Budget Allocation
Total FY 2018 – 2019	\$1,248,010.00
Evidence Collection Kits SAFE Hospitals	181,491.85
Evidence Collection Kits Non SAFE Hospitals	270,094.09
Forensic Assessment Providers	376,826.37
Supplies CT100, CT400	12,170.00
MDT Forensic Interviews	243,000.00
SAFE Program	164,427.69
Total Expended FY 2018 – 2019	\$1,248,010.00

Linda distributed and reported on the *Office of Victim Services Forensic Evidence Collection Reimbursement per Hospital FY 07/01/18 – 06/30/19 Expenses*.

Number of Patients	Total Reimbursed
1,126	\$828,412.31

Members discussed issues related to the numbers not reflecting reality, and issues with billing and coding.

5. Development of Initial Goals and Objectives

Denise distributed a memo and reviewed the requirements for SAFEs (who are not in the Program) to attend three consecutive Annual Competency Training days as stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) signed by each hospital. Denise stated that it was the charge of the Committee to oversee the Recertification Responsibilities of the Connecticut Judicial Branch as follows;

- a. The Judicial Branch will host a mandatory annual Competency Training every June, which must be attended by the SAFEs who have completed the Judicial Branch's training program.
- b. The annual eight hour Competency Training will address:
 - o Changes in the Technical Guidelines as revised by the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations (Commission), as amended from time to time;
 - o Relevant legislative updates; and
 - o Standard of care and clinical competency
- c. Successful completion of three consecutive, annual Competency Trainings qualifies the Hospital health care professional's SAFE certificate to be renewed for three years.

6. Identification of Issues

Members discussed issues related to improving the process such as webinars, on-line training, offering CEUs, and creating a user friendly step-by-step guide, and financial compensation to SAFEs for their time to complete competency training paid by hospitals.

Members also discussed issues related to communicating who functions as a SAFE within a hospital, creating a quick read guide, outreach to new resident doctors and APRN group, and how to become embedded in hospital protocol.

7. New Business

No new business was introduced.

Linda adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder