

MINUTES
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee
March 28, 2011

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room on Monday, March 28, 2011, from 2:04 p.m. to 3:42 p.m.

Statutory Members in Attendance:

Chair Linda J. Cimino, Hakima Bey for Michelle Cruz, Marielle Daniels, Candida Fusco, Robert Hoffman, Nancy Kushins, Joy Reho, Judith Rossi, Gregory Shangold, and Sharon Tarala

Non-statutory Members in Attendance:

Zoe Casey, Audrey Courtney, Anna Doroghazi, Michele Labonte, Patti LaMonica, and Karen Zott

Statutory Members Excused or Absent:

James Thomas

OVS and SAFE Program Staff Present:

Denise S. Covington and Brenda Jordan (OVS)

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Linda J. Cimino called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. and welcomed members. Members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the December 9, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Linda asked for a motion to accept the minutes of December 9, 2010. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.

3. Update: SAFE Program

Denise Covington provided the following updates:

1. General Update:

SAFE Program launched on December 2, 2010, with ten SAFEs and three participating hospitals. The remaining three hospitals joined the SAFE Program on February 4, 2011. Participating hospitals are providing the necessary records for quality assurance and four of the hospitals are participating as clinical examination precepting sites.

Since launching, the SAFE Program responded to 24 cases and currently has seven contracted SAFEs.

Eleven students from the initial Quinnipiac University (QU) SAFE course were awarded contracts and are in the process of completing the clinical requirements. The second QU course began on January 24, 2011, and completed March 12, 2011, with half of the students agreeing to participate in the program. The third class began March 21, 2011, with ten students and another session will be held in the Fall.

The students awarded contracts as SAFEs will participate in a mock clinical examination prior to placement on the on-call schedule. In addition, they will work with Denise, Candida Fusco, and Mary Nielson, who are serving as preceptors within the SAFE Program, during their first on-call response and will lead the examination with the preceptor observing during their second on-call response.

2. Community Partners:

The SAFE Program has collaborated with the Forensic Lab to provide instruction on properly collecting samples to preserve evidence, collection techniques to assist the Lab in processing evidence more efficiently, an overview of the sexual assault examination kit and the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations Technical Guidelines, and a tour of the facility to see how staff analyzes evidence. The first session was held on February 18, 2011, with two additional sessions to be held in April and May.

A collaborative agreement was developed with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc., to provide all 18 Planned Parenthood member sites as precepting sites for SAFE students.

3. Equipment:

SDFI TeleMedicine held two teleconferences with participating hospitals to answer questions and to prepare for the implementation of the SDFI system.

Participating hospitals were provided:

- locked refrigerators for evidence storage; a locked refrigerator policy has been developed and will be issued to participating hospitals;
- Gynocarts, one of which was returned by Middlesex Hospital, which is being used for the mock examinations; and,
- Alternate light sources.

4. Issues:

Members discussed several issues including negotiating clinical sites, competition with other educational institutions for preceptorships, malpractice insurance, SAFEs serving as a consultant to medical management, and the number of on-call cases.

Greg Shangold reported that he testified on House Bill 6622, An Act Concerning the Burden of Proof in Medical Malpractice Cases and the Standard of Care Related to Emergency Medical Care and Treatment. This bill may reduce the malpractice insurance costs for SAFEs as they fall under emergency room practice.

Linda reported that the new CT 100 sexual assault kits were delivered to the Forensic Lab on March 25, 2011. Joy Reho reported on the changes to the new kit including the elimination of the saliva sample and the reduction of the number of blood samples and smears taken. Joy stated that the Lab will distribute the older kits before distributing the new kits.

Linda and Joy discussed scheduling two dates in May and June at the Lab for hospital representatives to receive an overview of the new Technical Guidelines and the CT 100 kit.

Linda also reported that the SAFE Program Coordinator hours has increased to accommodate for the assigned duties of the SAFE Clinical Coordinator position as Nancy Mayeda-Brescia no longer serves in that position.

4. Update: Grant Funding

Linda reported that \$276,000 of grant dollars has been spent. The Violence Against Women Act grant ends September 2011 and the Justice Assistance Grant ends February 2013.

5. Update: CONNSACS Program

Nancy Kushins reported that Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS) has an advocate dedicated to assist the SAFE Program, serving as a liaison with rape crisis centers in the Program region, the SAFE Program Coordinator, and SAFEs. The advocate also worked with the SAFE Program Coordinator on a follow-up survey to victims on SAFE services.

Nancy reported that CONNSACS contracted with Laura Cordes to coordinate regional trainings and a multi-disciplinary conference that will be held June 16-17, 2011, at Central Connecticut State University with well-known presenters: Joanne Archambault and Prosecutor Patti Powers.

Judith Rossi inquired that because the June dates conflict with a mandatory prosecutor training for prosecutors with ten or less years of service would prosecutors be allowed to attend only one day of the conference. Nancy stated that she would let Judith know.

Nancy reported that the regional trainings that will define roles and participation in the SAFE Program will be held on April 20, May 6, and May 10, 2011, specifically for law enforcement, advocates, SAFEs and emergency department staff in the Program region.

Several members requested a copy of the training brochure, which Nancy stated she would distribute via e-mail.

6. Program Promotion

Linda reported that promotion of the program will occur in April to coincide with Sexual Assault Awareness month and sought suggestions from members on how to promote the program.

Members provided the following suggestions:

- Press releases; media coverage
- Outreach to college campus police in Program region
- Hospital internal newsletters
- Connecticut Hospital Association weekly update
- Eastern Connecticut Health Network communications staff
- Hospitals' public relations staff
- Connecticut Nurses' Association monthly publication
- Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians (CCEP) quarterly publication
- Outreach to high school nurses and physician offices in the Program region
- Connecticut Medicine Journal
- Connecticut Mirror
- CT News Junkie
- CONNSACS newsletters and Web site
- College consortium list-serve
- Program region rape crisis centers to distribute information to local communities
- Connecticut Police Chiefs Association newsletter
- Judicial Branch Web site
- Journal Inquirer
- Press conference around release of CT 100 kit

7. New Business

Greg announced that Zoe Casey will serve as the new CCEP representative, but Greg will still be available if needed.

Karen Zott reported that a participating hospital had transferred an eligible sexual assault victim to another hospital for services. Denise responded that she was aware of the situation and was addressing the issue with hospital staff.

Members agreed to meet on Monday, June 6, 2011, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Linda adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

Brenda Jordan, Recorder