

**Governor's Sexual Assault Kit Working Group (SAKWG)**  
**Meeting**  
**September 9, 2016**

Members Present: Laura Cordes, Maureen Platt, Anne Mahoney, Kerry Dalling, Guy Vallaro, Michelle Noehren

Members Absent: Cathy Malloy, Linda Cimino, Keith Mello

Invited Guests: Eleanor Michael, Kevin MacMillan (phone-in), Denise Covington (representing Ms. Cimino)

1. The meeting was convened at 2:05 pm.
2. Introduction of new members

Ms. Cordes introduced the new members of the SAKWG, Detective Kerry Dalling of the Fairfield Police Department and Michelle Noehren of the legislative Commission on Women, Children and Seniors.

## II. SAKI Grant Update

1. Unprocessed Kit Collection and Testing Numbers to Date

Mr. MacMillan reported on the total number of "untested" kits submitted to the lab, the number tested as well as the number of CODIS hits to date. (A summary sheet was distributed to SAKWG members.) Numbers were presented by the Judicial District as well. A total of 845 kits have been submitted, of which 104 were anonymous. Of the 845, testing has been completed on 290 kits, and there have been 108 CODIS profiles, with 34 CODIS hits.

Ms. Dalling asked if the kits are being tracked by town and individual PDs. It was noted that this data is available for untested kits on or before April 1, 2015, (which is a date tied to the SAKI grant, and the close of the survey from 2014/2015).

Ms. Noehren asked if there was knowledge of the cases with CODIS hits. Ms. Cordes responded that the group has not been provided with this information to date, and is hopeful that the case coordination plans that will be discussed later in the meeting will help with the victim notification, investigation and case tracking needed.

2. Tracking and Software

Mr. MacMillan updated the group on the tracking software, reiterating that the goals for procuring it is two fold--for tracking kits and monitoring the timely tracking and testing of all sexual assault kits to ensure that the problem does not reoccur. He added that the new state law helps get kits in more quickly (10 days for PDs to turn in, lab has 60 days to test).

The tracking process has begun, with Mr. MacMillan going out to hospitals to place unique bar codes on kits they have in their possession. The next step will be to get software. Dr. Vallaro has expressed his wish to purchase the software from UPS, which is the cheapest option for the state to pursue. The cost is \$7,000 for the initial set up of the program and a \$7,000 annual fee to maintain it. Mr. MacMillan indicated that no server is needed for the program, which will make it easier for the hospitals to use. Mr. MacMillan will provide training on the software's use. He emphasized that the amount of data that must be inputted into the system will be minimal.

Mr. MacMillan mentioned that only a couple of states have tracking systems for their kits. Michigan, which has two pilots under way uses UPS in the Wayne County pilot (includes Detroit). There, the PDs are included in the tracking system, presumably because they have county government. In Connecticut, only the hospitals and state forensic lab will be accessing the "untested" kits. Mr. MacMillan added that no kit will leave the lab without the lab knowing about it.

A motion was made to approve the purchase of UPS software for the state's new tracking software for kits. The motion carried.

Mr. MacMillan went on to explain the purchasing process. He hopes that by the next SAKWG meeting, the software will be purchased.

While he has been to the SAFE hospitals to add the bar codes to kits, Mr. MacMillan is also sending already coded kits to the state's larger hospitals. There may be other places that have kits (e.g., college campuses, military bases) and these will need to be coded, too.

Ms. Cordes noted that she sent contact information to Mr. MacMillan for the Connecticut Hospital Association to ensure that Mr. MacMillan is able to work with all of the state's hospitals in the coming months.

Ms. Covington encouraged Mr. MacMillan to write something for the Technical Guidelines for the Healthcare Response to Sexual Assault Victims as the information would be helpful to have written in the new edition for hospitals.

Mr. MacMillan clarified that the only kits getting coded are the CT-100s, not the CT-400s. The CT 400 hundred are used for toxicology screening only.

### 3. Training

Mr. MacMillan provided an update on the cold case investigations training. Jim Markey of RTI is available to provide a one-day training to law enforcement, state's attorneys, advocates, etc. on October 31, and November 1, 28 and 29. Since the Nov. dates fall after Thanksgiving, there was a preference plan for the Tuesday date, Nov. 29th.

### III. Discussion of Action Items and Timeline Handout

Members reviewed the updated working group timeline for the action items that were agreed upon at the last meeting. Ms. Cordes thanked Ms. Cimino and Mr. MacMillan for their contributions between meetings to develop the timeline.

## 1. Inventory and Tracking of Cases

The working group now has data on the previously untested kits and those that have been tested to date. The group discussed the need moving forward to be able to follow up on cases, by judicial district, at each SAKWG meeting.

Per the SAKI grantor requirements, the group must go back out and do another survey to supplement the 2015 one. This new survey, to be conducted in Fall 2016, will need to include the previously uncounted (if any) kits on college campuses, hospitals, and military bases. The results of this survey should be out by January 2017.

Members discussed the need for understanding how or if there is a need to capture data or develop protocols for the testing of kits from out-of-state hospitals when the victim is assaulted in Connecticut but goes to another state's hospital (e.g., Enfield to Springfield)]

Ms. Covington mentioned that the SAFE program is about to implement a new activation system for tracking and coding SAFE cases. The Judicial branch's IT division is building this.

## 2. Test Kits

Mr. MacMillan reported that a single, private vendor is helping the lab with the testing (approx. 400 kits per year). Ms. Cordes noted that while there is disagreement nationally over whether to test anonymous kits, that Connecticut has had a longstanding practice of not testing kits collected by victims who at the time of the exam and evidence collection choose to have their kit held to give them time to decide if they want to move forward with a report. Ms. Mahoney brought up the fact that sometimes victims will change their minds and there is a strong desire for CODIS hits as being reasons to test all kits.

Ms. Platt noted that she has asked PDs in her district to create a list/spread sheet for each of the kits that have hits so they can show reasons for moving forward or not moving forward with investigations or arrests in these particular cases.

Ms. Cordes reviewed the need to communicate with multiple parties at both the state and local level about the working group efforts. She will be preparing a document to distribute to police chiefs, state's attorneys, and judges and requesting meetings to coordinate victim notification, and information sharing on case outcomes for grant reporting and to identify barriers in kit transfers and investigations

Ms. Cordes noted that Chief Mello offered to help coordinate time for SAKWG members to discuss the working group at regional and statewide meetings of the CPCA.

Ms. Mahoney noted that the quick pace in which the lab is testing cases warrants quicker coordination among PDs and State's Attorneys with respect to examining cases with CODIS hits, and that coordination among all parties amidst ongoing cuts to staff in the judicial districts and within the Division of Criminal Justice may be challenging.

## 3. Victim Notification

The group discussed the work to develop a protocol for notifying victims and survivors, and Ms. Cordes shared the Joyful Heart Foundation report on victim notification for reference. Members noted the need to prioritize

and pursue cases that are bumping up against the relevant statute of limitations. Ms. Noehren expressed concern that any notification be based on best practices. Ms. Cordes expressed her preference that victims in any CODIS hit cases should be notified first.

Ms. Mahoney asked if there are any surveys at OVS or elsewhere that might provide templates for a letter that would go to the victim. Ms. Cordes indicated that The Alliance's Sex Offender Supervision Units have experience with notification as it relates to perpetrators being released from prison and will review their letters

#### 4. Training

Ms Cordes noted that the SAKI grant provides for training and technical assistance and has conducted webinars for the grantees. Ms. Cordes will create links to these and other resources on a webpage for working group members.

#### 5. SAKWG

There was consensus that the group continue to meet on a monthly basis. The group revisited the timing of reports and would like to create a first report for March of 2017.

#### 6. Research

Members revisited the need for a research component of the project. Timing for a new application was discussed. Mr. MacMillan said that a second round of grants will be coming, with the possibility of the Bureau of Justice Assistance making an announcement as soon as January 2017.

Ms. Dalling noted that PDs are collecting data on lethality assessment in DV cases and wondered if their tool would be of help.

#### 7. Next Steps

Ms. Cordes will prioritize a meeting with the Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane regarding the tracking of cases brought to the attention of the state's DNA and the setting up of multidisciplinary meetings in Judicial districts with the most kits and/or highest number of CODIS hits. These meetings will include The Alliance member programs, PDs, court based victim advocates, and State's Attorneys. Ms. Platt suggested that a state's attorney be appointed to serve as the point person for these meetings. Ms. Cordes said that the Alliance will prepare a one-pager outlining the goals of the meetings.

#### IV. Other Business

Ms. Cordes noted a federal bill that passed the House this week which established a federal victims' bill of rights in federal sexual violence cases.

#### V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Cohen, SAKWG Administrator