

# Governor's Sexual Assault Kit Working Group (SAKWG)

## Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2017

### Members Present:

Laura Cordes, Maureen Platt, Anne Mahoney, Michelle Noehren, Marshall Porter, Guy Vallaro, Linda Cimino

**Members Absent:** Cathy Malloy, Kerry Dalling **Guests:** Kevin MacMillan, Christine Landino

**Approval of Minutes from May 12th:** The minutes were reviewed and approved.

### Updates

#### *Unprocessed Kit Collection and Testing*

Kevin MacMillan distributed updates of the testing results. To date, 1156 SAKs have been submitted of which 587 have been tested with 56 CODIS hits. Members reviewed ongoing testing results and CODIS hits by Judicial District.

#### *Tracking Software*

Kevin MacMillan will be working with hospitals this summer to implement and train staff to utilize the tracking software. It takes approximately one week to trial and implement the software. Once the software is implemented, hospital staff are then trained.

#### *Transfers*

There is high compliance with kit transfers coming in at 6 days instead of the required 10- day transfer of kits.

### Victim Notification Guidelines:

The Victim Notification Committee met and worked on the guidelines. After discussions with other states and SAKI sites at the recent national meeting, the Committee moved to amend its proposal to the full group to provide notification to ALL victims when there is a CODIS hit.

Working group members discussed several points regarding the notification recommendations from the Committee.

- Throughout the country victims and survivors of sexual violence have noted the need to have an apology or acknowledgement in the delay of testing their kits when being notified. Members discussed the challenges around offering an apology when the exact reason for delaying the transfer of their kit to the lab may not be known. Members agreed to work on the language to acknowledge there was a delay to victims who expected their kits to be tested and discuss the advances in the utilization of kit and DNA testing.
- Members acknowledged that having guidelines for notification will be important but there may be instances where additional factors may need to be considered.

- Members proposed the creation of a notification letter from the Division of Scientific Services be sent to the Police Chief, the State's Attorney, a community-based sexual assault crisis services program, and the Chair of the SAKWG when there is a CODIS hit on a SAKI case. While a letter is currently generated to the State's Attorney and local Police Chief in the town where the alleged crime occurred, it does not include the additional people mentioned above. This second letter will help ensure that coordination among victim notification team occurs.
- New language and edits to the guidelines will be made and shared at the July meeting.

### **September 27th and 28th Training**

Members reviewed the agenda for the September training for law enforcement officers and other key stakeholders. Two speakers from the SAKI grant TA providers are confirmed: Jordan Sadinsky and Kelly Taylor from Fort Bragg. Dr. Vallaro will give opening remarks. Other speakers from the SAKWG will address the value of evidence, and victim notification.

Members discussed holding a training in October for law enforcement officers and sexual assault victim advocates on the victim notification guidelines. An additional training has been proposed on prosecuting SAKI and sexual assault cases for State's Attorneys in November.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, July 14, 2017 at 2:30pm. There will not be a meeting in August.