

MINUTES
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee
December 9, 2010

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Advisory Committee met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room on Thursday, December 9, 2010, from 2:39 p.m. to 4:09 p.m.

Statutory Members in Attendance:

Chair Linda J. Cimino, Marielle Daniels, Candida Fusco, Robert Hoffman, Nancy Kushins, Joy Reho, and Gregory Shangold

Non-statutory Members in Attendance:

Zoe Casey, Laura Cordes, Anna Doroghazi, Michele Labonte, Patti LaMonica, Martin Libbin, and Kelly Sinko

Statutory Members Excused or Absent:

Michelle Cruz, Sharon Tarala, and James Thomas

OVS and SAFE Program Staff Present:

Denise S. Covington, Brenda Jordan (OVS), Nancy Mayeda-Brescia, and James Morgan (OVS)

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Linda J. Cimino called the meeting to order at 2:39 p.m. and welcomed members. Members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the September 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Linda asked for a motion to accept the minutes of September 8, 2010. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.

3. SAFE Program Support Project – Training Component

Laura Cordes, contracted by Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS), reported that CONNSACS received grant funding from the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division to support the SAFE Program by providing a multi-disciplinary approach through victim-centered training. The funding, extended through June 2011, would provide four trainings. The first three trainings will be held in the pilot area for key stakeholders and would include a focus on rules, protocols, and victim dynamics.

The fourth training, currently under discussion, will offer either another small regional training or a statewide sexual assault conference on best practices, skills, law enforcement investigation, and underserved populations. Joanne Archambault, founder of End Violence Against Women and a renowned

speaker in sexual assault investigations, agreed to hold June 16 and 17, 2011, to serve as a conference speaker.

Laura and Nancy Kushins both extended an invitation to Committee members to provide suggestions on the training content and to serve as speakers.

Anna Doroghazi reported that as part of the same grant, CONNSACS has contracted with April Smolski to serve as the CONNSACS SAFE Advocate and as a liaison with OVS, SAFE coordinators and the three sexual assault rape centers in the pilot area. April is currently leading a police and medical outreach project to provide information on SAFE and the sexual assault advocates' roles.

4. SAFE Program Update

Jim Morgan reported that the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant was increased to \$346,000, extending the program an additional six months. The Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) is also funding the program. The GynoCarts are at the participating hospitals with the locking refrigerators to be shipped. The SDFIs have been received at OVS and will be distributed to the hospitals when all MOAs have been signed.

A member inquired if there would be a standardized process regarding the refrigerators. Denise Covington responded that when refrigerators are shipped to the hospitals, the chain of custody protocols will be established.

5. Program Coordinator Update

Denise Covington reported that the SAFE on-call system went live on December 2, 2010 with ten SAFES, including the program and clinical coordinators. Nancy Mayeda-Brescia performed the first sexual assault examination early Monday morning, December 6, 2010, at Windham Hospital and experienced a delay in law enforcement securing the evidence. There was also a small glitch in the on-call system that was soon resolved.

Members discussed the law enforcement delay. Denise informed members that she wrote a letter to the police chiefs in the pilot area informing them about the program and expectations.

Denise also reported that each participating hospital was provided with an instructional sheet, laminated by CONNSACS, on how to access the on-line system. Denise demonstrated to members how the hospital staff reached the on-call system, explained how the system works, and provided members with a copy of the instructional sheet.

Denise reported that the following hospitals have signed the MOAs: St. Francis Care, Manchester Memorial Hospital, and Windham Hospital.

Middlesex Hospital requested that their participation occur following a Leadership Meeting on December 16, 2010, where Denise will provide an overview of the program to attendees. Hartford Hospital and The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain campus, have requested additional changes to the MOA. Denise shared a portion of the requested changes with members.

Denise stated that future MOA discussions should include key hospital personnel, including Risk Management, Human Resources, and the Emergency Department Nurse Educator. Denise also recommended that because the Request for Interest (RFI) and the MOA were written separately that these documents should be reviewed for conflicting language.

Denise reported that the hospital orientation packets were completed and distributed a data collection sheet developed for grant compliance.

Denise stated that twelve participants of the first SAFE training course at Quinnipiac University completed the didactic program and started the clinical portion. The next two classes will begin in January and March 2011.

Members discussed the qualifications of SAFEs and whether the program should be extended to nurse practitioners in the women's health field, who may have more pelvic examination experiences. Members agreed that the clinical members of the Advisory Committee would assist the program coordinator in authorizing exceptions to the three to five years of acute care experience noted in the MOA and RFI.

6. Clinical Coordinator Update

Nancy Mayeda-Brescia reported that orientations were held in October and November for the ten SAFEs with speakers from OVS, CONNSACS, and the Division of Criminal Justice.

The twelve graduates of the Quinnipiac University SAFE course completed their first speculum examination at Yale and because three graduates live in the Stamford/Norwalk region, hospitals for clinical preceptorships will be sought in that region. A contract for hospitals to provide preceptorships is under review by the Judicial Branch Legal Services.

Members discussed how to retrieve additional quality indicators found in the hospital medical records that are not found in the data collection form currently developed. Among the suggestions, was to have the victim sign a medical record release to OVS with blank HIPAA releases kept in the GynoCart.

7. New Steps

The Committee will reconvene in March for a quarterly meeting.

8. New Business

No new business was introduced.

9. Adjournment

Linda adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Brenda Jordan, Recorder