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New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs  
October 16, 2017

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**Reasons for testing the old, untested SAEKs**

- Contribute to sexual assault investigations
- Enhance public safety by contributing to offender database
- Honor the victim who had the evidence collected
- Foster confidence in the system so that future victims will come forth

**UPDATE on the SAEK Memorial Task Force**

The SAEK Memorial Task Force has met four times since created in July 2016 with another meeting scheduled later this month. The Task Force members represent 17 agencies, including law enforcement, medical providers, advocates, DPS and APD Crime Labs, CODIS administrator, prosecutors and professional associations. Task Force meetings average 20-25 people, with many agencies sending multiple representatives.

Besides building relationships and providing a format for sharing, SAEK Task Force notable achievements include:

- Worked with Senator Mimi Stewart and the Attorney General's Office to clarify 30-1-9.2 relating to the statute of limitations for old SAEKs
- Supported the State Auditor's inventory of untested SAEKs
- Developed training module for law enforcement on the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit as part of their mandated biennium requirements for 2017.
- Developed statewide guidelines on Victim Notification
- Supporting DPS in meeting their requirements of the DOJ SAKI grant
- Researching best practices relating to law enforcement policies
- Supporting the process to develop the SAEK Fund to direct donations toward testing

As one of the Co-Chairs, I have become a point person and consistent voice to respond to media and citizen requests for information, coordinate and disseminate updates to co-responding sexual assault services (law enforcement, advocacy, evidence technicians, SANE and prosecution), conduct presentations and other out-reach activities.

## **TIME TO DISBAND THE SAEK MEMORIAL TASK FORCE**

- The US DOJ SAKI Grant administered by DPS created a state multi-disciplinary team (MDT) that will be building infrastructure that will prevent a backlog of untested sexual assault evidence kits from occurring again.

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- Albuquerque has created its own Sexual Evidence Response Team (ASERT) and with their recent award of a US DOJ SAKI Grant, APD will also be focused on comparable grant requirements.
- US DOJ federal grant requirements will ensure coordination, standardization, and oversight. US DOJ SAKI grant goals and objectives are the same as the SAEK Memorial Task Force.
- It is time to disband the SAEK Memorial Task Force. The team made significant progress in meeting the objectives of the Senate and House Memorials (previous page).
  - If the Task Force continues to meet, we will trip over the work being done by the DPS and APD work groups.
  - Many of the individuals on the SAEK Memorial Task Force are now active members of either/both the DPS and APD work groups.
  - The two Co-Chairs of the SAEK Memorial Task Force, Amy Orlando, Deputy Chief for DPS, and myself are in agreement that the Task Force has been effective but has also, run its course.
  - Personally, I give assurance that I am committed to continuing the work to solve the problems of the untested SAEKs as the Statewide SANE Coordinator.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The past two years has focused on the testing of the SAEKs. While continuing to support the Crime Labs, we need to shift attention forward on what happens *after* the SAEK is tested. This work can occur within the existing State and City working groups identified above and will include:

- Establish linkage between law enforcement and advocacy to share results from the tested SAEKs with victims.
- Continued training and support for law enforcement and increase staffing.
- Community education to correct the damaged public perception that sexual assault does matter and to validate the reasons why victims should report.

**You've received DNA results from the Crime Lab  
on a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK)  
NOW WHAT?**

The DNA results from a SAEK have huge implications for the sexual assault victim. Your next steps are **CRITICAL**. Your actions now will influence the sexual assault victim's participation in future criminal justice involvement.

Please know that contacting the victim will re-open the survivor's memories and feelings regarding the sexual assault. Your contacting the victim may pose significant emotional and physical risks. If there's been a delay in the analysis of the SAEK, contacting the victim may trigger strong reactions and anger.

**RESEARCH INDICATES A COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE WITH YOUR LOCAL RAPE  
CRISIS CENTER IS BEST**

Your local Rape Crisis Center Advocates are here to help. Rape Crisis Advocates have strong listening and communication skills that will help you when you contact the victim. Advocates know your community's resources. Advocates are linked to your community Sexual Assault Response Team, a group that can help your agency with how to conduct Victim Notification.

Based on research, we know effective victim notification strategies include:

- WHO:** Law Enforcement and Advocates working together as team
- WHEN:** When a DNA match is made, whether DNA has resulted in a CODIS hit or not.
- HOW:** First contact by phone or in person should be brief; second contact should be held at the Rape Crisis Center coordinated by the LE/Advocate team.
- WHY:** Victims want to be kept informed, to be told the truth – even when there is no good news. They want to be given options and time to make informed choices. They want input into the decisions that will affect them and their cases. They want to be supported and given resources for what happens next.

The science of Victim Notification indicates that a coordinated law enforcement and advocacy team strengthens the probability that sexual assault victims will support the investigation as well as further legal proceedings.

**CALL YOUR RAPE CRISIS CENTER TO LEARN ABOUT VICTIM NOTIFICATION**

Arise Sexual Assault Services: 1-575-226-7263  
Clayton Alternatives to Violence: 1-575-643-5335  
La Pinon Sexual Assault Services of Southern NM: 1-575-526-3437  
NM Asian Families: 505-717-2877  
Rape Crisis Center of Central NM: 1-505-266-7711  
Raton Alternatives to Violence: 1-575-445-5778  
Sexual Assault Services of NWNM/Farmington: 505-325-2805  
Sexual Assault Services of NWNM/Gallup: 1-505-399-5940  
Silver Regional Sexual Assault Services: 1-575-313-6203  
Solace Crisis Treatment Center (Santa Fe): 1-505-988-1951  
Community Against Violence (north central NM): 1-575-758-8082  
Tewa Women United: 1-505-747-3259  
Valencia Shelter Services: 1-505-565-3100

If you want more information or are unsure which program serves your area, contact Connie Monahan at the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, 505-883-8020 or [conniem@swcp.com](mailto:conniem@swcp.com)