

## **Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission**

### **Taylor County Service Plan**

#### **Local Board/SART Overview**

To meet SAFE Commission standards, Taylor County has formalized a coordinated response through the creation of a local board convened specifically to meet the SAFE Commission's guidelines. Members of this local coordinated response collaboration include:

- Prosecuting attorney's office
- Taylor Community Health Centers
- RDVIC
- Taylor County Schools
- Taylor County Health Department
- Grafton Police Department
- Taylor County Sheriff's Department
- West Virginia Department of Human Services

The local board/SART meets quarterly in conjunction with our MDIT date, which is the last Wednesday of the month at 1 pm at the Taylor County Prosecuting Attorney's conference room, with the intent to facilitate all of the below-mentioned items, as well as any other emergent issues beyond our initial scope.

- ☒ Share information and resources
- ☒ Identify gaps in the service delivery system
- ☒ Increase awareness on issues of sexual assault and stalking in the community
- ☒ Increase victim and community safety
- ☒ Develop professional relationships and an understanding of varying roles and responsibilities of first responders
- ☒ Develop, implement, and review county protocol to meet legislative requirements of the SAFE Commission

## ADVOCACY PROTOCOL

### **OVERVIEW**

A victim advocate provides free, confidential and non-judgmental emotional support, information, social service referrals and guidance following a sexual assault. A victim advocate's involvement will begin at the time the victim reports the sexual assault and extend beyond the point when other agencies have terminated their involvement. A victim advocate offers the victim the support needed to understand what is happening and make informed decisions.

Services can only be provided by trained advocates who have received a minimum of 32 hours of specific sexual assault advocacy training that meets the training standards established by the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services <http://www.fris.org/>.<sup>1</sup>

The following seven advocacy services meet core service standards. The following services exist in our county.

- ☒ 24/7 advocacy, support, and accompaniment during the medical forensic exam, law enforcement investigations and court proceedings
- ☒ Information for victims about reporting/not reporting to law enforcement
- ☒ Crisis intervention and/or emotional support to victims and their families
- ☒ Referrals and coordinated services with other agencies
- ☒ Support for victims through the criminal justice system
- ☒ Replacement clothing for victims after medical forensic exams, if needed
- ☒ Protection of victim privacy and confidentiality

Advocacy services within our county are by the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC). Crisis intervention, advocacy, shelter and support services can be accessed 24/7 by contacting 304-292-5100. RDVIC is the rape crisis center that will be providing follow-up services for victims receiving forensic exams at UHC.

If the victim needs medical care or requests a medical forensic exam, the transportation protocol should be activated and the victim immediately transported for treatment and evidence collection. When a victim goes to United Hospital Center, an advocate from

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<sup>[1]</sup> In cases of child abuse perpetrated against an adolescent as defined by WV law, the local Child Advocacy Center may also be contacted for support and/or forensic services.

HOPE Inc. (which provides advocacy services at UHC) will respond within 60 minutes. If a victim is being transported to UHC, a call can be made to HOPE Inc. at 304-367-1100 to alert them to send an advocate.

First responders will be informed of this Medical Forensic Protocol by:

Printed copies of the Taylor County SAFE Plan will be provided to partnering agencies by the prosecutor. The team will meet annually in February to develop, implement, and review the county plan to meet the legislative requirements of the SAFE Commission. A goal will be to implement staff training on the protocol at the member agencies to accommodate employee consistency and to incorporate the Taylor County SAFE protocol in all onboarding training for new employees.

**Phone numbers of Rape Crisis Centers to Activate Protocol:**

**For crisis services, shelter and support: RDVIC 304-292-5100**

**For advocacy at United Hospital Center: HOPE Inc. 304-367-1100**

## **MEDICAL FORENSIC PROTOCOL**

### **OVERVIEW**

Medical Forensic Services for Adolescent/Adult Victims ARE NOT Provided at Grafton City Hospital.

Medical Forensic Services for Adolescent/Adult Victims ARE provided per MOU with:  
United Hospital Center  
327 Medical Park Drive  
Bridgeport, WV 26330  
681-342-1000

Medical forensic exams are provided by physicians and SANEs available on-call 24/7.

First responders will be informed of this Medical Forensic Protocol by:

Printed copies of the Taylor County SAFE Plan will be provided to partnering agencies by the prosecutor. The team will meet annually in February to develop, implement, and review the county plan to meet the legislative requirements of the SAFE Commission. A goal will be to implement staff training on the protocol at the member agencies to accommodate employee consistency and to incorporate the Taylor County SAFE protocol in all onboarding training for new employees.

**Phone number to Activate Medical Forensic Protocol: 681-342-1000**

# TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOL

## OVERVIEW

The SAFE Commission requires that this transportation protocol must include the following four core components:

1. Accessible transportation, including the ability to transport victims with disabilities
2. Transportation to and from the medical forensic exam regardless of the victim's ability to pay
3. Plan for victim confidentiality
4. Plan to return the victim to his or her point of origin (or an agreed upon safe place) after the medical forensic examination

This Transportation Protocol will be activated when a victim of a sexual assault requires a medical forensic exam and cannot transport themselves to a facility that provides the needed exam. Taylor County has created a responsive service system with trained service providers who will provide transportation services to victims of sexual assault. As per the state SAFE Commission requirements, this protocol includes accessible transportation regardless of the victim's ability to pay and whether or not the victim is reporting to law enforcement. The plan addresses victim confidentiality and outlines a process to return the victim to their point of origin or a safe location after the medical forensic examination.

All victim information will be CONFIDENTIAL and will only be used for medical treatment and/or Law Enforcement investigation, if reported.

**Protocol.** When a sexual assault victim in Taylor County requires a medical forensic examination, and has no transportation to a facility providing such services, the following procedures will be activated when a sexual assault is reported:

1. **911 Call With Injuries.** If a sexual assault victim calls 911 needing emergent medical care, EMS and the appropriate law enforcement agency will both respond.
  - EMS will transport the victim (at no cost to the victim) to the appropriate medical facility, in this case, United Hospital Center with whom we have a memorandum of understanding.
  - IF the victim chooses to initiate a police investigation, the responding Law Enforcement Officer will document and report the incident. Law Enforcement (LE) will stay at the medical facility, if necessary for the safety of the victim, or return when the medical forensic exam is

completed to transport the victim to a safe location if needed following the examination.

- IF the victim chooses not to initiate a police investigation, LE will determine the immediate safety and security of the victim, provide contact information should the victim decide to make a report at a later date, and transport the victim to a safe location if needed following the medical forensic exam.
- Victims with disabilities will be transported to a safe location by the Taylor County Emergency Squad at NO cost to the victim.

2. **911 Call with No Injuries.** If a sexual assault victim calls 911 or contacts a Law Enforcement Agency to report a sexual assault, is safe and DOES NOT need emergent medical care, the appropriate law enforcement agency will be contacted and proceed to the identified location. The victim will be informed by the Law Enforcement officer of the medical forensic exam and Law Enforcement report/non-report options.

- IF the victim chooses to have a medical forensic exam and initiate a police investigation and does not have transportation, Law Enforcement will provide transportation to the appropriate medical facility, in this case, United Hospital Center. The responding Law Enforcement Officer will document and report the incident. Law Enforcement (LE) will remain at United Hospital Center if necessary for the safety of the victim, or return when the medical forensic examination is complete to transport the victim to a safe location.
- Victims with disabilities will be transported by the Taylor County Emergency Squad, at NO cost to the victim.
- IF the victim chooses NOT to initiate a police investigation and does not have transportation for the medical forensic exam, Law Enforcement will respond and provide transportation to United Hospital Center. The responding Law Enforcement Officer will determine the immediate safety and security of the victim and provide contact information should the victim decide to make a report at a later date. Law Enforcement will return when the medical forensic exam is complete to transport the victim to a safe location.

3. **Call to Rape Crisis Center.** If a sexual assault victim contacts a Rape Crisis Center after a recent assault, the advocate will inform them of the medical forensic exam and Law Enforcement report/non-report options. If the victim has emergent medical needs and/or requests to have a medical forensic exam but has no transportation, the advocate will guide the victim to call 911. This will then activate one of the protocols outlined above.

First responders will be informed of this Transportation Protocol by:

Printed copies of the Taylor County SAFE Plan will be provided to partnering agencies by the prosecutor. The team will meet annually in February to develop, implement, and review the county plan to meet the legislative requirements of the SAFE Commission. A goal will be to implement staff training on the protocol at the member agencies to accommodate employee consistency and to incorporate the Taylor County SAFE protocol in all onboarding training for new employees.

**Phone number to Activate Transportation Protocol: 911**