

**Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission Tyler County Service Plan
Tyler County Prosecutor's Office
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(304)-758-2860**

OVERVIEW

To meet SAFE Commission standards, Tyler 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
- Tyler County Sheriff's Office
- West Virginia State Police
- Sistersville Police Department
- Paden City Police Department
- WV DHS Child Protective Services
- WV DHS Adult Protective Services
- Lighthouse Child Advocacy Center
- Family Crisis Intervention Center
- Tyler 911

The local board will meet quarterly with the intent to:

- ☒ 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 nonjudgmental 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/>.¹

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 provided by Family Crisis Intervention Center (FCIC). Crisis intervention, advocacy, shelter and support services can be accessed 24/7 by contacting 304-758-4606. FCIC is the rape crisis center that will be providing follow-up services for victims receiving forensic exams at United Hospital Center (UHC) and Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville). For victims choosing to report a sexual assault to law enforcement, services can be provided in collaboration with the Tyler County Prosecutor's Advocate.

^{1,1} 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.

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 Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville), an advocate from Family Crisis Intervention Center (FCIC), which provides advocacy services for Tyler County will respond within 30 minutes. If the victim is being transported to Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville), a call can be made to FCIC at 304-758-4606 or 800-794-2335 to request an advocate to be sent.

When a victim goes to United Hospital Center (UHC), an advocate from 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 Advocacy Protocol by:

At the first meeting of the local board each year in March, this protocol will be reviewed and a sign-in sheet maintained to ensure all agencies on the team have been notified and trained on the protocol. First responders will be informed of this protocol by the supervisor of their agency. Each supervisor will provide a copy of the approved plan to each first responder in their agency and review the plan with all new hires as part of their onboarding/training process.

Phone numbers of Rape Crisis Centers to Activate Protocol:

For crisis services, shelter and support: FCIC 304-758-4606 or 800-794-2335

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

MEDICAL FORENSIC PROTOCOL

OVERVIEW

Services are provided via letters of agreement with medical facilities from other counties:

Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville)
314 S. Wells Street
Sistersville, WV 26175
ER nurses' station 304-447-2517

United Hospital Center
327 Medical Park Dr
Bridgeport, WV
ER nurses' station 681-342-1120

Medical forensic exams are provided by Physicians and/or SANEs. Law Enforcement or other first responders will contact the hospitals listed above - Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville) and United Hospital Center - to ensure the availability of a SANE being available to conduct the exam at their medical facility. First responders will start with the facility that is closest for the victim.

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

At the first meeting of the local board each year in March, this protocol will be reviewed and a sign-in sheet maintained to ensure all agencies on the team have been notified and trained on the protocol. First responders will be informed of this protocol by the supervisor of their agency. Each supervisor will provide a copy of the approved plan to each first responder in their agency and review the plan with all new hires as part of their onboarding/training process.

PHONE NUMBERS TO ACTIVATE MEDICAL FORENSIC PROTOCOL:

Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville): 304-447-2517

United Hospital Center: 681-342-1120

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

Protocol. When a sexual assault victim in Tyler 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 emergency 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, Marietta Memorial Hospital (Sistersville) or United Hospital Center.
 - IF the victim chooses to initiate a police investigation, the responding Law Enforcement Officer will document and report the incident. Law Enforcement (LE) (Tyler Co. Sheriff's Office, VW State Police, Sistersville Police Dept. and Paden City Police Dept.) 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. If needed and the victim chooses to report the assault to law enforcement, the Victim Advocate from the Prosecutor's Office may also provide transportation to and from the appropriate medical facility with approval from LE.
 - IF the victim chooses NOT to initiate a police investigation, LE (Tyler Co. Sheriff's Office, VW State Police, Sistersville Police Dept. and Paden City Police Dept.) 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 Tyler County EMS or Middlebourne EMS, 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 (Tyler County Sheriff's Office, VW State Police, Sistersville Police Dept. and Paden City Police Dept.) will provide transportation to the appropriate medical facility (United Hospital in Clarksburg or Marietta Memorial Hospital in Sistersville). 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 complete to transport the victim to a safe location. If needed and the victim chooses to report the assault to law enforcement, the Victim Advocate from the Prosecutor's Office may also provide transportation to and from the appropriate medical facility with approval from LE.
 - IF the victim chooses NOT to initiate a police investigation and does not have transportation for the medical forensic exam, LE will respond and may provide transportation to the appropriate medical facility (United Hospital in Clarksburg or Marietta Memorial Hospital in Sistersville). 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. LE will return when the medical forensic exam is complete to transport the victim to a safe location.
 - Victims with disabilities will be transported to a safe location by EMS (Tyler County EMS or Middlebourne EMS) at NO cost to the victim.
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 call 911. This will then activate one of the protocols outlined in numbers 1 and 2 above.

First responders will be informed of this Transportation Protocol by:

At the first meeting of the local board each year in March, this protocol will be reviewed and a sign-in sheet maintained to ensure all agencies on the team have been notified and trained on the protocol. First responders will be informed of this protocol by the supervisor of their agency. Each supervisor will provide a copy of the approved plan to each first responder in their agency and review the plan with all new hires as part of their onboarding/training process.

Phone number to activate Transportation Protocol: 911