Quarterly Meeting Via Zoom
Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission
of the
West Virginia Governor's Commission on Crime, Delinquency and Correction
2/6/2025

Members Present:

Nancy Hoffman	WV Foundation for Rape Information and Services
Debra Lopez-Bonasso	WV Foundation for Rape Information and Services
Dave Miller	WV State Police Forensic Laboratory
Tracy Shroyer-Carlyle	WV Child Advocacy Network
Terry Fenger	Marshall University Forensic Science Center
Dr. Joan Phillips	CAMC Pediatrics Abuse Specialist
Dr. Christopher Goode	Emergency Room Physician
Gabrielle Mucciola	WV Prosecuting Attorney's Association
Larry Hasley	WVSAKI Project
Beth Cook	Director of Child Advocacy Center
Hallie Morgan	WV Hospital Association

Members Not Present:

Jonathan Adler	WV Association of Counties
Angelita Nixon	SANE Representative
Tiffany Edwards	WVU Forensic and Investigative Science Programs
John McComas	WV DHHR
Katie Spriggs	Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center

Guests:

Kayce Ward	Tex-TRAC
Kim Zemanck	Tex-TRAC
Carrie Smith	Tex-TRAC
Marty Hatfield	Supreme Court of Appeals

DAS/JCS Staff Present:

Tina Desmond	DAS Director
Brittany DeCrease	WV SANE Coordinator
Ellen Vance	Criminal Justice Specialist Program Manager
Carol Blankenship	JCS Criminal Justice Specialist
Erica Turley	Research Specialist
Brad Bailey	Programs Assistant Director
April Darnell	HR Assistant Director
Wendy Fink	Administrative Services Assistant

Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Nancy Hoffman welcomed SAFE Commission members to the meeting.

Approval of 10/31/2024 Meeting Minutes: Dave Miller made the motion to approve the minutes of the 10/31/2024 meeting. Debra Lopez-Bonasso seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2024 Emergency Legislative Rule: The Rule is effective as of August 5; it still needs to go through the legislative process due to the changes made (primarily the January 1, 2026, effective date) and clarifications to make the language consistent.

SAFE Commission Website Update: Erica Turley has had no major updates since the last meeting. The committee is developing an outline for the site which JCS will be able to create in-house to include the county plans plus SANE and SAKI information.

SAFE Standards Sub-Committee Work Group Update: Nancy reported that the work group has met 11 times in the last 3 months, which included meetings with six rape crisis center directors representing 18 counties. Since 10/31, eleven counties have submitted revised or updated plans. Meetings are already scheduled with five county prosecutors. Hospital MOU templates have been negotiated with Vandalia Health System and Logan Memorial; efforts have been made to connect with the following additional hospitals for MOU templates to share with county prosecutors: Raleigh, Welch, Cabell Huntington, and Camden Clark. Only one county (Wirt) has no plan submitted; 8 counties have submitted initial plans but have not responded to requested revisions.

SAFE Training Sub-Committee Update: Debra reported that the training committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive plan to support the hospitals to meet the legislative rule. There were four informational webinars for hospitals held last summer, recorded, and links provided to enable review of the information. The results of these webinars included a comprehensive outline of the requirements, templates outlining criteria for developing a treatment plan or a transfer plan, resource page with links, template for creating an MOU, outline of SANE training coursework requirements, listing of all SANE trainings outside of WV approved by the IAFN, opportunity offered to discuss any questions, request of hospitals to designate a SANE Champion, and a database created to log and track the submission of WV hospital's transfer and treatment plans. The training committee then created a sub-group to create a process and plan for approving SANE training options, including the application, clinical logs, database to track nurses being trained, renewal process, discharge paperwork, and a DFSA flyer.

Brittany DeCrease, the WV SANE Coordinator, reported that 38 nurses completed the didactic training from November 2024 to January 2025. Clinical skills and practicum training are already scheduled through July 2025. Some hospitals are offering bonuses to take the training, while some hospitals are not allowing SANE training. Brittany now has a core group of trainers and has developed a training manual. Twelve facilities have taken advantage of an equipment mini-grant that FRIS offered; a second mini-grant application period is underway (deadline 2/28/25) and four additional facilities have expressed interest. There are now 38 hospitals (out of 50) that have designated a SANE Champion/point of contact. Brittany shared a map of facilities with SANE-trained nurses. The pediatric training components have been slow to develop but are making steady progress. For the pediatric online course, FRIS is working with a consultant out of Chicago. The course should be launched within 60-90 days. Of the 39 modules, 19 are completed.

Tex-TRAC Presentation: Kayce Ward, Kim Zemanck, and Carrie Smith gave a presentation on Tex-Trac, their TeleSANE program based in Texas. Their program was statutorily created in 2019 as a statewide telehealth center for sexual assault medical forensic exams supported by the Texas Attorney General's Office. They do offer 24/7 teleSANE availability, go onsite to train staff planning to use their services, including telehealth equipment, and testify in court. The committee discussed the presentation.

SAFE Data Collection Sub-Committee Update: Out of the 50 kits that were made up by the lab due to the kit order delay, only a few were sent out. The order of the new kits arrived in late November (but had been ordered in June 2024). Dave initially planned to place the next order in March 2025, and have the kit information available on the website. However, they were ordered in January 2025, so these 1,100 kits that were ordered early will not have the telehealth information. There are plenty of kits now for training as well. In 2024, 526 kits were mailed out with 349 sent back (fewer than in past years). Out of those 526, 100 were from Ruby. The kit tracking system needs to identify/add if it was pediatric/adolescent case and if telehealth was used; the reimbursement tracking does identify pediatric vs. adult. In 2024, there were 253 requests for reimbursement for adult/adolescent and 75 requested reimbursements for pediatrics. The number of kits scoring 'poorly collected' has significantly decreased in 2024.

SAKI Project Update: Larry was asked to present at the National SAKI conference in D.C. on WV's direct submission of the kits to the State Police Crime Lab. He also went to Denver for the National SAKI conference and spoke there as well about West Virginia's direct kit submission statute. He is hoping to have cold case investigators across the state in the future. The funds for SAKI had been frozen, released, and then the recent federal Executive Order froze the funds again. The project's investigator is making significant progress in several older cold cases. Police Departments around the state are increasingly engaging in the project.

Next Meeting: By consensus, the next meeting will be on May 28, 2025, at 9 am via Zoom.