



Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Microsoft Teams Video Meeting

In attendance:

Argi Magers, Barbara Darley, Carrie Williams, Dan Katz, Del. J. Sandy Bartlett, Detective Sergeant Kristen Clark, Heather Amador, Jane Krienke, Jessica Volz, Jessica Williams, Kristen Lease, Laura Jessick, Michelle Groves, Pamela Holtzinger, Rhonda Scott, Scott Shellenberger, Tiffany Rexrode.

Committee Meeting

Opening Remarks

Committee Counsel, Jessica Williams, welcomed everyone and started the meeting.

SAKI Grant Update

- SAKI Grant Inventory & Testing

Jessica Williams provided the updates about the status of the SAKI grant inventory and testing. She advised that the Phase V inventory was submitted for approval on May 20, 2022 and included inventories for the Salisbury Police Department and the Brunswick Police Department. When the Phase V inventory is certified by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the SAKI grant inventory for the State of Maryland will be complete.

Testing under the SAKI grant is steadily progressing. Thus far, 535 kits have been submitted for testing, 430 kits have been tested by Bode, 55 DNA profiles have been uploaded into CODIS, and there have been 10 CODIS hits. Due to a recent administrative change at the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS), up-to-date testing information is not readily available. GOCPYVS has indicated that they will provide updated information soon.

- Victim Notification Protocol & Services

Laura Jessick from the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) provided updates about victim notification under the SAKI grant. MCASA recently hired two new SAKI Grant Victim Advocates to provide victim services. MCASA also has been approved to purchase billboards to publicize the SAKI grant op-in phonelines. Lastly, Ms. Jessick advised the largest barrier to provide victim services is obtaining up-to-date contact information for victims.

- SAKI Tracking System



Heather Amador from GOCPYVS provided the update about the statewide tracking system. She advised that the Governor's Office is in the process of finalizing the request for proposals (RFP). GOCPYVS plans to release the RFP soon and hopes to conclude the procurement process by the end of the year.

SAKI Grant Discussion Question

This SAKI grant discussion question was raised by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office during the SAKI Q&A Session in December 2021. Laura Jessick from MCASA framed the following question for the Committee: "For SAKI grant cases, if the local State's Attorney's Office determines that a case is unfounded (either false or baseless) and declines to prosecute the case, is the law enforcement agency required to submit the case to the local SART for an Untested Kit Review?"

The SAEK Committee ultimately answered this question in the affirmative, deciding that the case must still be submitted to the local SART for an Untested Kit Review. Although this will require LEAs to utilize resources, there are benefits to conducting Untested Kit Reviews aside from prosecutorial purposes, including improving sexual assault response for victims. Additionally, if the LEA decides to submit the kit for analysis and a profile is produced, it may be eligible for upload into CODIS, which could solve other sexual assaults. The LEA retains the final authority to determine whether a kit is submitted for testing.

SAEK Committee – Virtual Dialogue Series

Jessica Williams discussed the SAEK Committee's upcoming 3-part virtual dialogue series. During the series, the SAEK Committee will invite experts and practitioners in the field to offer their input and establish solutions to address (1) drug-facilitated sexual assault; (2) the SAKI grant and the benefits of effective collaboration; and (3) the transfer and storage of SAEKs. The dates for the virtual dialogue series will be finalized soon and posted to the SAEK Committee's webpage.

Future SAEK Committee Meetings

The SAEK Committee discussed having in-person meeting starting in September. The consensus was that Committee members would prefer hybrid meetings which would allow members to participate virtually and in-person. The Office of the Attorney General indicated that the Office would explore this meeting option.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15AM.