12/13-065

Lee County Sexual Assault Response Team
(SART)

Memorandum of Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement stands as evidence of the commitment of the agencies listed below to implement a SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) in Lee County.

In October 2009, the Lee County Sheriff's Office along with the Abuse Counseling and Treatment Center (ACT) and the State Attorney's Office collaborated to establish a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) tailored to meet the needs of victims in Lee County. Guided by a victim-centered approach to sexual violence, SART was established to ensure competent, coordinated and effective intervention for victims of sexual assault. SART organizes interagency, multi-disciplinary responses to the victim and the community. The following agencies offered valuable sources of insight and knowledge on the topic of responding to sexual assault and served as resources for developing this agreement.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Sanibel, and Edison State College Police Departments will be responsible for investigating sexual related crimes, and will ensure the quality and integrity of the investigation. Detectives of the Special Victims Unit of each law enforcement agency will provide training for first responders of their respective agency regarding the trauma experienced by victims of sexual assault, initial interviews and the collection of evidence when responding to scenes of sexual violence.

The State Attorney's Office for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit will be responsible for prosecuting sexual related crimes and will work in coordination with the respective agencies to ensure an effective response to sexual assault.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement will work with law enforcement to provide analysts that will examine items of evidence to identify the presence or absence of body fluids that can provide DNA evidence of the donor.

Abuse Counseling and Treatment (ACT) and their Rape Crisis Center Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) Program will provide housing and counseling for victims of sexual abuse. The physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of the victim will be given strong consideration throughout the investigation. And, victims will have their diverse needs recognized and action will be taken to provide appropriate services. SANE nurses will collect evidence and provide medical treatment for victims of sexual abuse and will conduct a prompt, compassionate, comprehensive and objective forensic medical exam for victims seeking care.

The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) will assist law enforcement with interviewing children who may have witnessed acts of sexual violence.

Lee Memorial Health Systems and the Lee County Health Department will provide medical care and follow-up for victims of sexual abuse.

WHEREAS, the Lee County Sexual Assault Response Team's mission is to provide services that ensure a transition from victim to survivor for every individual whose life is impacted by sexual violence.

WHEREAS, the values embraced and promoted by the team include:

Collaboration, which is creating consistency in the forensic evidence collection and criminal justice process which improves services to victims and increases opportunities for prosecution.

Communication, which is committing to listen to one another's concerns and opinions, and offer support through community education and resources,

Professionalism, which is respecting the roles, responsibilities, needs, and opinions of each member on the team to meet the needs of the criminal justice process and support victims,

Victim-Centered, which is recognizing the physical and emotional needs of sexual assault victims throughout the process.

The following are the guiding principles of the Lee County SART:

Participate in the planning and implementation of SART initiatives;
Support of the Rape Crisis Center as the sexual violence program/center for Lee County;
Training of patrol officers and detectives in the SART approach by implementing first responder training;
Training Assistant States Attorneys in the SART approach;
Ensure training for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE);
Ensure victim advocacy and continuity of care for sexual assault survivors;
Involve the Florida Department of Law Enforcement(FDLE) in the training of SANE, Assistant States Attorneys, local law enforcement investigators and crime scene personnel in protocol development and case reviews;
Ensure coordination with the Attorney Generals Office, Bureau of Victim Compensation, to facilitate access to victim compensation and sexual battery claims programs;
Participate in bimonthly SART meetings to discuss any issues/concerns related to providing services to sexual assault survivors;
Provide an increased level of communication between criminal justice partners throughout all phases of the criminal justice process;
Ensure there is a positive and constructive problem-solving atmosphere among all SART partners to manage an effective and responsive system to sexual assault survivors;
Ensure a process for the effective review of cases, including analysis of trends and best practices in the areas of sexual assault response, treatment, intervention, analysis and prosecution; and
Ensure there is a culturally competent system of care.

We, the undersigned, agree to participate in this process, provide the resources needed to be successful, and to continue to work collaboratively to better serve the victims of sexual assault in our community.

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Mike Scott, Sheriff — Date
Lee County Sheriff's Office

_____

John Burke, Special Agent in Charge — Date
Florida Department of Law Enforcement

_____

Steve Russell, State Attorney — Date
State Attorney's Office for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit

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Jay Murphy, Chief of Police — Date
Cape Coral Police Department

_____

Douglas Baker, Chief of Police — Date
Fort Myers Police Department

_____

William E. Tomlinson, Chief of Police — Date
Sanibel Police Department

_____

Richard Parfitt, Chief of Police — Date
Edison State College

_____

Jill Turner, Executive Director — Date
Children's Advocacy Center

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
for City of Sanibel
Kenneth B. Cuyler
CITY ATTORNEY

Jennifer Benton, Executive Director
Abuse Counseling and Treatment (ACT)

Date

Judith Hartner, MD,
Director, Lee County Health Department

Date

James Nathan, President and Chief Executive Officer
Lee Memorial Health Systems

Date

Dagmar Sullivan ARNP, Nurse Practitioner
Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc./SANE Program Coordinator

Date

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 10, 2013

TO: Pamela Smith

FROM: Chief William Tomlinson

SUBJECT: MOU Lee County SART

Attached please find the Lee County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Memorandum of Agreement to be placed on the City Council agenda.

This agreement is for the Lee County Sherriff's Office, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Sanibel, and Edison State College Police Departments to be responsible for investigating sexual related crimes.

Other agencies involved are the State Attorney's Office for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, FDLE, ACT and their SANE Program, CAC, Lee Memorial Health Systems and Lee County Health Department.

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