

Did You Know?

WV Code §61-8B-16 states that a victim of sexual assault is NOT required to participate in the criminal justice system OR cooperate with law enforcement to have a forensic medical examination.

West Virginia has...

■ A Multidisciplinary Protocol for Responding to Victims

The protocol details the medical, law enforcement, prosecution, and advocacy response to sexual assault. This multidisciplinary approach is essential to provide adequate support for the victim and to facilitate the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the offender.

■ The Forensic Medical Examination Fund

The fund provides reimbursement to licensed medical facilities performing forensic medical examinations in sexual assault cases. The fund provides a flat reimbursement rate for costs related to forensic medical exams conducted within a reasonable time after the sexual assault.

For reimbursements to be made from the Forensic Medical Examination Fund, the kit disposition must be entered into the sexual assault kit tracking system by the medical facility. An invoice will be generated and forwarded to the WV Prosecuting Attorneys Institute for payment.

■ SART/SANE Programs

A SART/SANE program can be tailored to the needs of any locality or region to provide a victim-centered response to sexual assault. The West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (WVFRIS) provides information and technical assistance to individuals and organizations interested in developing a SART or SANE program.

If you are a victim of sexual assault, call the rape crisis center in your area.

Someone is there to listen and to help.



AWAY-Advocating a Way for Adults and Youth
Beckley
304-255-2559

Centers Against Violence
Elkins
800-339-1185
Text line 304-840-SAFE

CONTACT Huntington
Huntington
1-866-399-7273

Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center
Martinsburg
304-263-8292

Family Crisis Center
Keyser
1-800-698-1240

Family Crisis Intervention Center
Parkersburg
1-800-794-2335

Family Refuge Center
Lewisburg
304-645-6334

HOPE, Inc.
Fairmont
304-367-1100

Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center
Morgantown
304-292-5100

REACH The Counseling Connection
Charleston
304-340-3676

Sexual Assault Help Center
Wheeling
800-884-7242

Stop Abusive Family Environments
Welch
800-688-6157

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

THE SART Sexual Assault Response Team AND SANE Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

INITIATIVE IN WEST VIRGINIA



**West Virginia Foundation for
Rape Information and Services**
www.fris.org

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What is a SART?

A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a group of community professionals who coordinate an immediate, high quality, multidisciplinary, victim-centered response to sexual violence. The SART creates a system to monitor the effectiveness of the response and to promptly address problems in service delivery.

Who are Members of a SART?

A SART typically includes a victim advocate from the local rape crisis center, medical personnel or a SANE, law enforcement officers, and the prosecutor. Other partners may include representatives from the health department, emergency medical services, child/adult protective services, college campuses, organizations serving victims from underserved populations, and social service agencies.

What are the Benefits of a SART?

- A SART uses a victim-centered approach that provides compassionate, efficient and highly skilled care and support for a victim throughout the criminal justice system.
- A SART can increase the likelihood that a victim will seek follow-up assistance and long-term support to promote healing, whether or not the sexual assault is reported to law enforcement.
- A SART can assess and improve the effectiveness of current coordinated responses.
- Research indicates that SARTs can increase both the reporting of sexual violence and the conviction rate of offenders.

SART/SANE Initiative

The goals of the SART/SANE initiative are to:

- Create the necessary support systems that are critical to healing and provide trauma-informed care to victims of sexual assault
- Provide victims with prompt, compassionate care
- Improve the quality and preservation of the evidence collected

Options for Reporting a Sexual Assault

All victims of a recent sexual assault can have the forensic medical exam conducted within 96 hours of the assault. (Certain circumstances may allow for an exam beyond the 96 hours.) Adult victims may choose not to report the assault to law enforcement at the time of the exam.

- **Report to Law Enforcement-** If the case is reported to law enforcement, the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit should be sent directly to the WV State Police Forensic Laboratory.
- **Non-Report to Law Enforcement-** Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits of adult victims who choose NOT to report the assault to law enforcement will be sent to and stored at Marshall University Forensic Science Center. Victims may later decide to initiate a report to law enforcement.

Ways to Help Victims

- Believe them.
- Listen to them without judgment. A victim may not remember every detail of the assault.
- Provide the information and resources needed to help them make informed decisions. Respect those decisions and be supportive.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame for what happened to them.

What is a SANE?

A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is a registered nurse with advanced education and clinical preparation to conduct medical forensic examinations for victims of sexual assault.

A SANE is trained to:

- Provide comprehensive care to victims of sexual violence
- Identify and document injuries
- Collect evidence and maintain the chain of custody
- Provide referrals for related follow-up health services
- Be prepared to testify in a criminal or a civil trial as a fact or expert witness

What are the Benefits of a SANE Program?

- SANEs can provide 24/7 services for victims of sexual assault. This shortens wait time and provides comprehensive care for the victim.
- SANEs are trained to collect and preserve forensic samples and document any findings.
- SANEs provide referral services for follow-up care to address the victims' long-term healthcare concerns following a sexual assault.
- SANEs' thorough evidence collection and comprehensive documentation can strengthen the case for the prosecution.