

GORDON COUNTY SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to establish guidelines for achieving a “best practices” response to criminal allegations of sexual assault or abuse upon persons aged 18 and older in Gordon County. (For persons under the age of 18, the separate and established Child Abuse Protocol for Gordon County is to be referenced.) These guidelines are designed to ensure a cooperative and coordinated effort between trained personnel from Gordon County Sheriff’s Office, City of Calhoun Police Department, Fairmount Police Department, Gordon County District Attorney’s Office, Gordon County Magistrate, Gordon County Health Department, Gordon County Child Advocacy Center, Gordon County Domestic Violence Outreach, and AdventHealth Gordon to achieve our shared mission.

Sexual assault for this protocol shall be defined as, but not limited to, Rape, Sodomy, Aggravated Sodomy, Sexual Battery, Aggravated Sexual Battery, Sexual Assault, Criminal Attempt to Commit Sexual Assault, or any other sexual assault.

MISSION STATEMENT

A cooperative and coordinated Sexual Assault Response Team seeks to reduce the ongoing trauma experienced by victims of sexual assault and abuse. Our mission is to maintain the well-being of an individual victim while gathering evidence to bring the responsible person(s) to justice.

Goals:

- Provide a sensitive and caring response to victims of sexual assault by all disciplines.
- Ensure that victims are aware of their right to have a victim advocate present at interviews and during medical forensic exams.
- Aim for culturally competent responses to all people.
- Provide quality services to all victims regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age.
- Provide advocacy, forensic medical interviews, examinations, and counseling.
- Ensure that follow-up medical care is offered.

- Provide crisis intervention, support and follow-up counseling resources for primary and secondary victims.
- Ensure competent, coordinated and effective services by all disciplines, including initial and ongoing training of team members.
- Maintain quality control through timely case reviews.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM (SART)

Structural Components

A Sexual Assault Response Team is composed of a select group of multidisciplinary representatives from community agencies and systems involved in protecting victims, identifying offenders and prosecuting crimes; specifically, law enforcement, sexual assault nurse examiners, advocates and the District Attorney's Office. A strong line of communication between team members is essential to the success of a SART, the welfare of the victim, and the successful prosecution of the offender(s).

Membership

1. According to O.C.G.A. 15-24-2 the following agencies of the judicial circuit shall designate a representative to serve on the SART:
 - (A) The office of the sheriff of each sheriff's office in the judicial circuit;
 - (B) The office of the district attorney;
 - (C) The magistrate court;
 - (D) The office of the chief of police of a county of each county within the judicial circuit in counties which have a county police department;
 - (E) The office of the chief of police of the largest municipality in the county of each county within the judicial circuit; and
 - (F) The county board of health of each county within the judicial circuit;
 - (G) A local citizen of the judicial circuit;
 - (H) A representative of a sexual assault or rape crisis center serving the judicial circuit or, if no such center exists, then a local citizen; and
 - (I) A health care professional who performs sexual assault examinations within the judicial circuit or, if no such person exists, then a local citizen.

(A) The membership of the Gordon County SART satisfies the statutory requirements and will include ex officio members who will serve as needed. Ex officio members are any individuals, corporation, non-profit institution not included in Statute 15-24-2 and who have an established area of focus which is consistent with the goals of the SART. Ex officio members will serve as needed and may include representative(s) of GCCAC and local educational institutions.

(B) The SART members will fulfill the primary functions of: specialized forensic interviews, forensic medical examinations with evidence collection, advocacy, investigations and case coordination. A strong line of communication between team members is essential to the success of a SART, the welfare of the victim and the successful prosecution of the offender(s.)

Confidentiality

The meetings and proceedings of a committee or subcommittee of the Gordon County Sexual Assault Response Team in the exercise of its duties shall be closed to the public and shall not be subject to open meetings.

Members of the SART and attendees shall not disclose any victim information that is discussed at any meeting except as is required by law. A confidentiality form will be part of the sign in sheet and will be signed by each person present at every meeting.

When meetings are held electronically, case numbers will be used instead of victim names to maintain the confidentiality of the victim.

ISSUANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SART PROTOCOL

1. The Sexual Assault Response Team shall have the responsibility of developing, approving, and implementing the Sexual Assault Response Team Protocol.
2. The Sexual Assault Response Team will review this protocol annually or at the request of any participating agency.
3. The protocol shall be made available to members of the Sexual Assault Response Team and all participating agencies.
4. To encourage active compliance with the protocol, participating agencies shall be charged with distributing the protocol to appropriate staff and training personnel.

THE SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM PROTOCOL

Overview

Sexual assault and sexual abuse cases may be complex and difficult to substantiate legally. Typically, there are few, if any, physical findings, and no eyewitnesses or other forms of corroborating evidence to substantiate the victim's report. To provide the best possible environment for forensic evidence collection, interagency coordination and planning is crucial. A cooperative team response is an effective way to prevent re-traumatization of victims. Utilizing the SART method will allow the highest likelihood of maintaining the well-being of victims and bringing perpetrators to justice. General referral criteria for initiating the SART process includes:

1. The report of sexual assault or abuse occurring within Gordon County.
2. The report of sexual assault or abuse occurring outside of Gordon County, or in an unknown jurisdiction, for which a courtesy report may be accommodated and for which collection of perishable evidence may be accomplished.

INITIAL CONTACT AND ASSESSMENT

Contact with the SART may be initiated in a variety of ways. Law enforcement, Sexual Assault Hotline, and hospital personnel are the most likely points of contact for initiating the SART process. An ideal response includes:

1. A brief initial interview by the first responder.
2. A thorough forensic medical examination performed by a trained sexual assault nurse examiner.
3. An in-depth interview to minimize the number of times a victim must recount the assault.
4. Ensuring the victim's questions and concerns are addressed.

TEAM MEMBER ROLES AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The participating agencies and their representatives have varying roles and responsibilities during the investigation and justice system involvement. Participating agencies work together to minimize ongoing trauma to the victim while ensuring the highest likelihood of achieving justice.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Law enforcement's overall role in responding to a sexual assault complaint is to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive investigation relating to the complaint, gather evidence needed for a successful prosecution, and apprehend the suspected assailant.
2. Protect and support the victim by linking them to the appropriate community resources.

THE ROLE OF THE FIRST RESPONDING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement will be dispatched to the scene of a sexual assault complaint. Law enforcement will obtain the initial information about the assault and provide reasonable safety and aid to the victim. The first responding law enforcement officers will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine circumstances of the incident, suspect(s), location of evidence, and secure a reported crime scene. If the victim requires emergency medical care, ensure the victim is provided transport to the hospital of their choice for a physical examination and necessary medical treatment. If deemed necessary, a supervisor or designee should also respond and evaluate the assault complaint.

To accomplish these tasks the first responding law enforcement officer(s) will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Upon receipt of the call, the officer will meet with the reported victim of the assault to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim. The responding officer will immediately accept the responsibility for protecting any evidence or crime scene and will notify their supervisor or designee and brief them of the circumstances and known facts.
2. Assess the victim for medical and special needs – child, translator, disabled, etc.
3. Using sensitivity and non-judgmental questions, conduct a brief initial interview of the victim to gather information on the circumstances leading up to the crime, and actions during and after the crime. This determines if the elements of a sexual assault are met. (Uniform officers should avoid in-depth questioning of the victim.)
4. Identify any available witnesses who have information in relation to the incident, and conduct preliminary witness interviews, as needed. Interviews will be recorded with an audio or digital device in its entirety.

5. Determine identity and location of suspect(s).
6. Arrest suspect(s), if appropriate.
7. The Patrol Supervisor or designee will notify the on-call CID supervisor and advise him/her of the known information regarding the incident.
8. The responding officer will escort the victim to meet with the on-call detective, if needed.
9. The responding officer will, as soon as practical, complete an initial report and make the report available to the responding detective/investigator.

THE ROLE OF THE RESPONDING DETECTIVE/INVESTIGATOR

If the decision is made by the patrol supervisor to have the detective/investigator respond to the scene, the detective/investigator will respond to the appropriate location and begin a thorough investigation of the complaint. To accomplish this task, the responding detective/investigator should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. On arrival, meet with the supervisor/responding officer to be briefed on the incident. Gather any additional information and make the appropriate referral to GCCAC for a forensic medical exam, crisis coordination and advocacy. However, in all sexual assaults, GCCAC will be notified as soon as possible after the reporting of the event at 706-483-5984. If possible, meet with sexual assault nurse examiner prior to the examination and brief them on the details of the incident. Make sure crime scene is secured for any future search warrants. The on-call detective/investigator will contact their supervisor and the on-call supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that all appropriate resources have been requested.
2. Unless it is imperative to continue the investigation, or the victim requests an immediate interview, the victim should have the opportunity to rest after the sexual assault examination as opposed to having to come immediately to the law enforcement agency for an interview or to provide a written statement. All interviews will be recorded with an audio or digital device in its entirety.
3. Provide the victim with contact information of the investigating agency and the investigating officer.
4. Inform the victim of the criminal investigation procedure.
5. Inform the victim of options related to participating with law enforcement in the criminal investigation, making sure the victim is aware evidence can be collected and held for a minimum of 12 months even if he/she chooses not to move forward with the investigative

process. It is important to also explain to the victim, if he/she chooses to participate with law enforcement, of the need to collect physical evidence, arrange a prompt interview, and hand over relevant articles, objects, clothing, etc.

6. Demonstrating sensitivity and using non-judgmental language, inform the victim of the need to ask direct and detailed questions concerning the incident.
7. Evaluate the evidence and facts of the case and determine if a crime has occurred.
8. Interview any witnesses having information related to the incident and document their statement. All interviews are recorded in its entirety.
9. Obtain search warrants, arrest warrants, and arrest the suspect when appropriate.
10. Complete a through crime scene investigation and collect evidence related to the incident. Crime scenes should be photographed before any evidence is removed. Any physical evidence that may implicate the suspect should be seized. Such items of evidence include, but are not limited to: fingerprints, objects, and materials that potentially contain bodily fluids such as used condoms, bedding and towels, victims clothing and fluids. Evidence involving alcohol and/or related drug consumptions whenever drug facilitated sexual assault is suspected.
11. Interview the suspect, complete suspect exam and document any statements, admissions for confessions, if applicable. Interviews will be recorded in its entirety.
12. In the event that suspect is identified, a suspect exam will need to be completed as soon as possible to obtain physical evident from the suspect's body. Evidence collected will be conducted by a search warrant for any and all evidence pertaining to the suspect (s).
13. Review victim information and conduct a follow-up interview of the victim, documenting their statement(s) related to the incident. The detective/investigator should inform the victim they have a right to an advocate present for any follow-up interviews. If the victim requests an advocate, the detective/investigator shall notify the appropriate agency to dispatch a representative to the site of the interview. The detective/investigator shall wait a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed on 1 hour for the advocate to arrive before beginning the interview. The detective/investigator shall reserve the right to exclude an advocate from the interview in the event the victim requests an advocate no longer be present.
14. The follow-up interview(s) should be recorded with either an audio or digital device.
15. When the sexual assault examination begins, the detective/investigator should continue the investigation and remain on-site with the victim while the exam is taking place. When the examination is completed, the sexual assault nurse examiner will brief the detective

/investigator on the exam and turn over any evidence that was collected during the forensic exam.

16. The detective/investigator should maintain contact with the victim and advocate throughout the investigation.
17. Assist and consult the Gordon County District Attorney's Office on filing charges and prosecuting the crime as needed.
18. If an investigation of a sexual assault reveals the identity of a suspect and the victim elects not to pursue an investigation or prosecution, or for some reason charges cannot be filed against the suspect, the case file and/or investigative report may be forwarded to the Gordon County District Attorney's Office for review.

PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

When a forensic medical examination is performed, evidence is collected, and the victim wishes to proceed with a criminal justice response by reporting the sexual assault to law enforcement, the evidence shall be submitted to the Division of Forensic Sciences of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation pursuant to O.C.G.A. 35-1-2 within 30 days of being collected.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 17-5-71, in cases in which the victim reports an alleged sexual assault to law enforcement, the state or local investigating law enforcement agency shall maintain any physical evidence collected as a result of a reported sexual assault that contains biological material, including, but not limited to, stains, fluids, or hair samples that relate to the identity of the perpetrator of a reported sexual assault, for 30 years from the date of arrest, or seven years from completion of sentence, whichever occurs last, and if no arrests, then for 50 years.

If the victim chooses to not cooperate with law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of a reported sexual assault, Gordon County Child Advocacy Center shall maintain any physical evidence collected as a result of such reported sexual assault that contains biological material, including, but not limited to, stains, fluids, or hair samples that relate to the identity of the perpetrator of the reported sexual assault, for not less than 12 months from the date any such physical evidence is collected and five years for Office of Special Investigation (OSI).

Departmental policy may require evidence be held for a longer period than required by Georgia law.

MUTUAL AID

In the event a victim presents to Sexual Assault Hotline and/or a local hospital and evidence is collected, and for unforeseen reasons the agency with jurisdiction is unable to retrieve the evidence in a reasonable amount of time, the local law enforcement agency will accept the evidence into custody and hold it until arrangements can be made to transfer it to the agency with jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the agency with jurisdiction to contact the local agency to arrange pickup. This is only to be used in rare instances when the jurisdiction is unable to respond in an appropriate time due to distance or unavailability of staff.

COSTS FOR MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND RETRIEVAL OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Pursuant to O.C.G.A 17-5-72, a victim shall have the right to have a forensic medical examination regardless of whether the victim participates in the criminal justice system or cooperates with law enforcement in pursuing prosecution of the underlying crime. A victim shall not be required to pay, directly or indirectly, for the cost of a forensic medical examination. The cost of a forensic medical examination shall be paid by the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund, as provided for in Chapter 15 of this title.

LAW ENFORCEMENT'S ROLE WITH RELUCTANT VICTIMS

A victim may want to make law enforcement aware of the assault, but not participate with an investigation. In the event a victim declines to participate with an investigation, or requests that no report be filed, or investigation take place, law enforcement personnel should refer the victim to Sexual Assault Hotline (706-483-5984) to discuss their options. Staff at Sexual Assault Hotline will offer support, information, and other services, including local, state, and national referrals.

If a report is made and the victim declines participation with law enforcement, and injuries are present, the victim should be encouraged to seek medical attention at a health care facility. If injuries are not present, law enforcement should contact the Sexual Assault Hotline to arrange for the victim to receive services, if the victim so desires. The officer should explain that there might be a need for prophylactic treatment for sexually transmitted infections or for the prevention of

pregnancy. The victim should also be informed that evidence can be collected and held for a minimum of one year by civilian law enforcement, or five years if being maintained by OSI, even though the victim declines to participate with law enforcement.

If a case is referred to the District Attorney's office for prosecution, the District Attorney's office shall make the determination as to whether to proceed with prosecution. In determining whether to prosecute the matter; the prosecutor shall consider, among many other factors, the desires of the victim in electing to proceed with prosecution.

GORDON COUNTY SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

The Gordon County Child Advocacy Center will be the designated place for sexual assault patients to receive an assessment of injury, evidence collection and prophylactic treatments with advocacy accompaniment. In the event the victim presents to the emergency department or contacts law enforcement, the Sexual Assault Hotline will be notified prior to sending the victim to the GCCAC by calling 706-483-5984. In the event the victim is not medically stable, and the forensic nurse is credentialed at the requesting hospital, a forensic nurse will report to the hospital where the victim is located and complete the medical assessment and collection of evidence at the hospital.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Advocates with the Sexual Assault Hotline will advocate for the rights of sexual violence survivors and assist in ensuring fair, sensitive and respectful treatment. All services will be free and confidential. Services will be offered to survivors and their friends, family, and significant others regardless of gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation and or socioeconomic status. The services provided include 24-hour hotline, forensic medical exams, advocacy, emotional support, crisis intervention, follow-up services or referrals to community services. The role of the forensic nurse is to conduct quality forensic medical sexual assault examinations and, with the consent of the victim, provide exam findings to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.

Patient Consent:

Consent for medical treatment is not the same as consent for evidence collection. O.C.G.A. 31-9-2 specifies who can consent for medical treatment. Evidence collection and releasing evidence to law enforcement can only be consented to by the patient or, if a minor, the minor's legal

guardian. A guardian for an adult person is someone who is appointed by the court to make decisions on behalf of someone else.

Declining the Collection of Evidence:

All victims, regardless of age, have the right to have evidence collected and to decline all or part of an examination for evidence collection. Consent for evidence collection, once given, can be withdrawn at any time during the examination. Patients have the right to decline the collection of reference specimens, such as pubic and head hair, blood and/or saliva for typing, and blood or urine for toxicology.

Patients Lacking the Capacity to Consent:

If the patient lacks decision making capacity to give informed consent and has no legal guardian, evidence that may be destroyed due to medical care or time may be collected and held by medical personnel. Chain of custody will be maintained while the victim gains the capacity to consent, a guardian is appointed, or a court order is obtained by law enforcement to release the evidence. Evidence will not be turned over to law enforcement without the permission of the patient, the patient's legal guardian, or a court order.

If the patient is a minor, under the age of 18, please refer to the Gordon County Child Abuse Protocol.

**VICTIM ADVOCATE/VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE
ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Role of Victim Advocate

The advocate's primary role is to provide information, support, accompaniment, advocacy and follow up support services to ensure continuity of care to direct and indirect victims of sexual assault and abuse, from the first contact to case closure. These services are provided 24/7/365.

The advocate's responsibilities include assuring the victim's legal right to have an advocate present at the Gordon County Child Advocacy Center/hospital for any medical evidentiary or physical examination and have an advocate present at any interview.

When a victim is uncertain whether to report a crime, the advocate's role is to provide accurate, relevant, and requested information likely to aid in restoring the victim's sense of control and personal dignity.

Recognizing the profound effects of sexual assault and abuse traumas, a core role of the advocate is to provide referrals for counseling and support services to those who report crimes as well as those who decide not to report. GCCAC provides crisis intervention and follow-up services after the event, as well as referral information for other community resources to support the recovery and well-being of survivors.

Role of the Advocate in Law Enforcement Interview:

1. Respond to the interview location within 1 hour of notification (Law enforcement should call the Sexual Assault Hotline (706-483-5984) when an advocate is needed.
2. Provide advocacy and support during the interview process, if requested.
3. When/if the investigator feels the need to shift the interview to suspect status, the investigator will inform the advocate in private. The advocate will then leave the interview.

In reporting cases, Advocates will:

1. Respond to accompaniment requests within 1 hour and report to the location of the exam.
2. Coordinate with law enforcement in cases where Sexual Assault Hotline is the first point of contact for a victim who indicates wanting to make a police report.
3. Coordinate forensic medical examination when needed.
4. Provide medical accompaniment during applicable forensic examinations and evidence collection at the request of law enforcement or victim.
5. Provide clothing following the collection of evidence.
6. Provide information on Victim's Rights and Victim's Compensation.
7. Provide follow-up contact with the victim's consent after a forensic medical examination to assist in connecting the victim with services needed.

In non-reporting cases, Advocates will:

1. Act in the same capacity as when a victim chooses to report.
2. Offer support and outline reporting and medical options to victims at any point of contact.

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) provides forensic examinations and evidence collection related to the rape and sexual assault or abuse of children, adolescents and adults within Gordon County. All SANES who are contracted with GCCAC have completed a 40-hour Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Adult/Adolescent didactic training and completed clinical hours to reach proficiency in the care of adult/adolescent sexual assault patients.

FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) will:

1. Meet the victim at the GCCAC or the emergency department.
2. Obtain patient consent for the forensic medical exam.
3. Obtain patient's account of occurrence. This may be done through a joint or coordinated interview with the law enforcement officer and advocate. Explain audio/video-taping procedure to the victim if used.
4. Conduct physical assessment.
5. Collect evidence as warranted.
6. Offer and provide medications for prophylactic treatment of certain sexually transmitted infections.
7. Offer and provide medication for prevention of pregnancy.
8. If the victim is seen in the emergency department, evaluate for continued care and treatment, including reporting to the physician and victim's nurse any findings from the exam.
9. Photographs taken by SANES will be maintained at the GCCAC with the original chart. In a reporting case, law enforcement will take possession of the sexual assault kit and any other evidence (e.g. clothing, shoes etc.). In non-reporting cases, the sexual assault kit and any other evidence will be kept at GCCAC.
10. Upon request, timely provide all evidentiary items collected and produced by the SANE to the District Attorney's office. SANE examiners, in matters requiring court testimony, shall strive to cooperate with the District Attorney's office to ensure availability for their testimony.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Role of the Gordon County Health Department:

The primary role of the Gordon County Health Department is to serve as a referral source following a forensic medical examination and as a service provider for victims of sexual assault.

A victim of sexual assault who presents to Gordon County Health Department will be provided information and support. GCCAC (706-483-5984) may be contacted for direction related to the initial care of the sexual assault patient. Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) will be notified when appropriate for minors.

If a victim is referred to the Gordon County Health Department for follow-up after receiving a forensic exam or, after evaluation at a health care facility, the Health Department Registered Nurse (RN) or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) will perform a pertinent exam. This will include providing information and education, as well as services such as emergency contraception, follow-up testing and/or treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and counseling for appropriate follow-up testing if recommended. Referrals may be made at that time to other health care providers as deemed necessary. Patients will be informed of all services and resources available.

SUSPECT EXAM

The examination and evidence collection from the suspect are both important parts of making sure evidence in sexual assault cases is comprehensive and complete. Any evidence that could be transferred from the suspect to the victim may also be transferred from the victim to the suspect. In the event a suspect is identified, a suspect exam will need to be completed as soon as possible to obtain physical evidence from the suspect's body. Evidence collection may be conducted with consent by the suspect or with a search warrant. At a minimum, the person collecting evidence should be prepared to collect buccal swabs, 25 pulled head hairs, vaginal swabs, penile swabs, scrotal swabs, combed pubic hair, matted hair cuttings, 25 pulled pubic hairs and fingernail scrapings and/or fingertip swabbing. Law enforcement will determine if the clothing or other material on the suspect needs to be collected. All collected evidence will be turned over to the law enforcement officer and secured as evidence.

Any cost incurred related to a suspect exam and evidence collection will be the responsibility of the requesting agency. All evidence collection performed on active-duty members will be funded by the line installation commander.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the District Attorney/Assistant District Attorney:

It is the role of the District Attorney's Office to prosecute criminal violations of the law in the Superior Court of Gordon County. Cases are referred by the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred. The prosecutor reviews each case and decides whether to file criminal charges. If criminal charges are filed, it is the role of the District Attorney's Office to prosecute the case in conformance with Georgia Law, as well as the policies and procedures of the District Attorney's Office. Taking into account the circumstances of the offense and the defendant's criminal background, the State will attempt to secure an outcome which is equitable and just for the victim and the community. Additionally, the prosecutor will argue for an appropriate bond amount (or no bond if appropriate) and seek applicable bond conditions to keep the victim and community protected, while ensuring the defendant's appearance in court.

Victim Contact:

The District Attorney's Office will make every reasonable effort to protect the privacy of the victim when requested. The victim's address will only be divulged to the defense attorney for legitimate discovery purposes. Also, when photos of the victim's intimate body parts are disclosed in discovery, the prosecutor will seek to limit the copying and dissemination beyond that required for preparation of the defense.

Victim's Rights:

The District Attorney's Office will be knowledgeable of, and advise the sexual assault victim of his/her rights, including but not limited to:

- The right to have the suspect tested for the HIV virus.
- The right to confer with the prosecutor about the case disposition.
- The right to be heard at sentencing.
- The right to receive restitution as provided by law.

- The right to have a victim advocate present for any interview.

Familiarity with Victim:

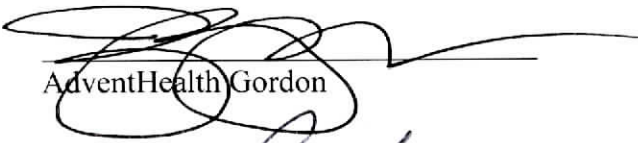
In order to assess the strength of a case, the prosecutor may interview the victim early in the process and before the filing of charges. Upon request, the prosecutor or victim advocate will ascertain the victim's concerns and wishes and will consider them throughout the process. The prosecutor will keep the victim advised of the progress of the case. Additionally, should dismissal of charges be required at any point, the prosecutor shall advise the victim of that necessity prior to the dismissal of the charges.

Defense Access to Victim:

Access to victims by the defense is governed by O.C.G.A. 17-17-8.1, which provides that if the victim agrees to speak with the defense, he or she may set conditions for the interview. These conditions may include the presences of the prosecuting attorney and/or his/her agent. Other provisions may be set by the victims as outlined in the aforementioned code section. The prosecutor shall advise the victim that they are not required to talk with anyone about the case, including the defense attorney or a private investigator. They should also be advised that should they wish to speak to someone about the case, the prosecutor or investigating officer may be present if the victim so requests.

Victim's Attendance in Court:

The District Attorney's office will make every effort to limit unnecessary waiting in court. The victim shall also be made aware of court proceedings as quickly as possible. Arrangements should be made to avoid contact between the victim and the defendant or any defense witnesses. Additionally, the victim should be advised of their right to have support persons accompany them.


AdventHealth Gordon

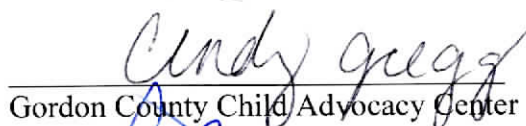
01/19/2022
Date


City of Calhoun Police Department

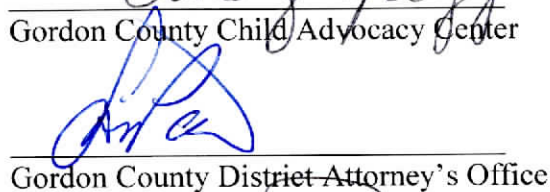
01-06-22
Date


Fairmount Police Department

01-06-22
Date


Gordon County Child Advocacy Center

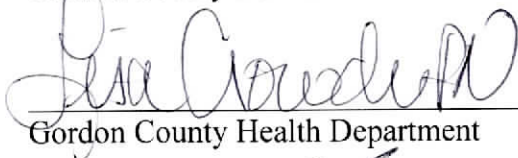
1/6/2022
Date


Gordon County District Attorney's Office

1/6/2022
Date


Gordon County Domestic Violence Outreach

1-6-2022
Date


Gordon County Health Department

1-7-2022
Date


Gordon County Magistrate's Office

1-6-22
Date


Gordon County Sheriff's Office

1-6-22
Date


Gordon County Citizen Representative

1/10/2022
Date