

SEXUAL ASSAULT PROTOCOL FOR BULLOCH, JENKINS, EFFINGHAM, AND SCREVEN COUNTIES

(Concerning victims ages 13 and over)

Among the Ogeechee Circuit District Attorney's Office and Victim's Services Program, Area Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Area Emergency Rooms (ERs), Area Law Enforcement Agencies, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), Department of Child and Family Services (DFCS), and Statesboro Regional Sexual Assault Center, Inc. (SRSAC)

Introduction: The following procedures are proposed in order to provide the best possible treatment of sexual assault victims in Bulloch County, Jenkins County Effingham County, and Screven County, Georgia, and the best possible forensic evidence collection for the prosecution of sexual assault cases. These procedures are intended to cover any victim, age 13 and over, who reports sexual assault to any law enforcement agency or discloses to hospital or emergency response personnel or who contacts SRSAC or its Crisis Line within 120 hours or 5 days after a sexual assault.

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PROTOCOL FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Bulloch, Jenkins, Effingham, or Screven County EMS is notified by 911 of a sexual assault:

I. INJURIES:

1. Ambulance is dispatched to the scene;
2. Appropriate law enforcement notified for further investigation according to the jurisdiction of the sexual assault;
3. EMS personnel will regard the victim and all belongings as evidence in a crime and caution is used not to contaminate or destroy evidence;
4. EMS personnel will assess the condition and determine if medical treatment is needed; if needed-
5. Injured patient is taken to the appropriate county hospital or to East Georgia Regional Medical Center (EGRMC) unless the victim requests otherwise;
6. Emergency Room personnel rule out any injury; if an injury, medical treatment is obtained before the medical forensic examination is completed; and
8. Once cleared for injury, the patient is transported by law enforcement or private car to The Teal House, 18 North College Street, Statesboro for a medical forensic examination and treatment per medical protocol.

II. NO INJURIES:

1. Appropriate law enforcement notified for further investigation according to the jurisdiction of the sexual assault.
2. Law enforcement calls the Crisis Line to obtain a SANE for a forensic medical examination for reporting or non-reporting case; and
3. Patient transported by law enforcement or private car to The Teal House, 209 South College Street, Statesboro, Georgia.

PROTOCOL FOR EMERGENCY ROOM

I. General:

1. If an individual presents to the EGRMC ER or other ER for treatment of a sexual assault, the ER personnel calls 911 which dispatches law enforcement.

2. Law enforcement determines if a medical forensic examination is needed. The victim can have a choice in consenting to a forensic medical examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting case.
3. Law enforcement contacts the CRISIS LINE 1-866-489-2225 to obtain a SANE.
4. If a SANE is not needed, Law Enforcement contacts CRISIS LINE 1-866-489-2225 for a SRSAC Advocate.
5. Emergency room personnel will rule out any injury; if an injury exists, medical treatment is obtained before the forensic examination. (ER personnel will be careful not to destroy any forensic evidence).
6. Once the victim is cleared from injury or medical treatment has been completed, the victim is transported by law enforcement and/or family car to The Teal House, 18 North College Street, Statesboro, Georgia. The medical forensic examination can be completed.
7. The SANE contacts the CRISIS LINE 1-866-489-2225 to obtain a SRSAC Advocate.
8. The SANE will meet Law Enforcement and the victim at The Teal House, 209 South College Street, Statesboro, Georgia for the medical forensic examination.

PROTOCOL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

I. General

1. Law enforcement has been notified of the sexual assault report or is directly notified by a sexual assault victim; law enforcement will act according to their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) regarding investigations.
2. In the course of official duties, if law enforcement has reason to believe that an adult has been a victim of a violation of Code Section 16-6-1, relating to rape, or Code Section 16-6-2, relating to aggravated sodomy, he or she will provide a written statement of "INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF RAPE OR FORCIBLE SODOMY," as required by O.C.G.A. §§ 17-18-1; 17-18-2. A copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

3. Law enforcement determines if a medical forensic examination is needed. The victim can have a choice in consenting to a medical forensic examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting victim.
4. The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) approach is the best way to interview a victim who has been sexually assaulted because it avoids duplicate interviews. The SART approach is when the interview occurs with law enforcement, SANE, and the Advocate present. However, under some circumstances the interview may be conducted without all team members present. The Detective is the primary interviewer of the sexual assault victim.
5. The Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will be notified in cases involving a child (anyone under the age of 17) when the perpetrator is the caregiver or when other minor children in the home are at risk. DFCS caseworker may be present during the interview process.
6. The forensic evidence that is collected by the SANE and/or ER Staff is given directly to the case detective or investigator to maintain the chain of custody for collection of forensic evidence.
7. The detective/investigator/SRSAC advocate may refer the sexual assault victim to services at the Office of the District Attorney, Ogeechee Judicial Circuit for Victim's Compensation, and court accompaniment.
8. The SRSAC staff and Victim Services may contact the sexual assault victim for follow-up service.

² Statesboro Regional Sexual Assault Center (SRSAC) 24 hours Crisis Line, 1-866-489-2225 – used to dispatch SANEs and SRSAC Sexual Assault Crisis Advocates.

II. WITH INJURIES

1. Law enforcement will assess the condition and determine if medical treatment is needed. If needed, the injured victim is taken to the appropriate county hospital ER by EMS or law enforcement, unless the victim requests otherwise.
2. Emergency room personnel rule out any injury; if an injury, medical treatment is obtained before the medical forensic examination, being careful not to destroy any forensic evidence.
3. Law enforcement determines if a medical forensic exam is needed. The victim can have a choice in consenting to a medical forensic

examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting case.

4. Once the victim is cleared from injury or medical treatment has been completed and he or she is transported by law enforcement or private car to The Teal House, 18 North College Street, Statesboro, Georgia, the medical forensic examination can be completed.

II. NO INJURIES

1. Law enforcement determines if a medical forensic examination is needed. The victim can have a choice in consenting to a medical forensic examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting case.
2. If there are no injuries, the victim will be transported by law enforcement or by private car to The Teal House, 209 South College Street, Statesboro, Georgia, for the medical forensic examination.

III. NO FORENSIC EXAMINATION

1. If no forensic examination is provided to the sexual assault victim, a SRSAC advocate can be dispatched to the appropriate law enforcement agency or local emergency room to provide crisis intervention services. The appropriate law enforcement agency will make a room available for this meeting. However, if the victim does not wish to meet with a crisis advocate, a courtesy call will be made by law enforcement to notify SRSAC Advocate that there was a sexual assault reported and the victim may call the CRISIS LINE 1-866-489-2225 or the SRSAC advocate may call the victim.

PROTOCOL FOR STATESBORO REGIONAL SANES

I. General

1. Law enforcement determines if a medical forensic examination is needed. The victim can have a choice in consenting to an examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting case.
2. Law enforcement will arrange for transportation of the sexual assault victim to The Teal House, 209 South College Street, Statesboro, Georgia.
3. The SANE calls the CRISIS LINE 1-866-489-2225 to dispatch a SRSAC Advocate.
4. The SANE has 45 minutes to arrive at The Teal House to meet law enforcement, the sexual assault victim and the SRSAC advocate once she has communicated with law enforcement.
5. The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) approach is the best way to interview a victim who has been sexually assaulted because it avoids duplicate interviews. The SART approach is when the interview occurs with law enforcement, SANE, and the victim advocate present. However, under some circumstances the interview may be conducted without all team members present. The detective is the primary interviewer of the victim.
6. The medical forensic examination is conducted by a SANE up to 120 hours or 5 days after the sexual assault occurs,^{3,4} according to the medical protocol signed by Dr. James Hiller, Director of Medical Services for the SANES. The forensic exam is conducted with SRSAC advocate in attendance.
7. The Forensic Examination Evidence Forms of a sexual assault victim is completed by the SANE as the SANE conducts the forensic medical exam, which is signed by Dr. James Hiller as soon as possible (preferably within a two-week period)
8. The Forensic Examination Evidence Forms is peer-reviewed by another SANE at a later date.
9. At any time during the medical forensic examination, if the SANE deems it necessary, based on physical injuries, the SANE will contact Dr. James Hiller, Director of Medical Services for SANES and the SANE Coordinator for further consultation. If necessary, law Enforcement and/or EMS will be contacted for transportation of the sexual assault victim to EGRMC ER.
10. After completion of the forensic medical examination, the

SANE completes the SANE Report for Services and submits that form along with the signed CJCC form to the SANE Coordinator. The SANE Coordinator completes the SANE Invoice for Services and submits that form and the signed CJCC form to the Executive Director of SRSAC.

11. The Executive Director SRSAC submits the signed CJCC form and the SANE Invoice for Services to CJCC for SANE remittance for performing the medical forensic examination.
12. CJCC sends the check for SANE services to Executive Director of SRSAC who in turns submits the remittance check to the SANE.

3Mayntz-Press, K.A., Sims, L.M., Hall, A., and Ballantyne, J. (2008). Y-STR Profiling in Extended Interval (≥ 3 days) Postcoital Cervicovaginal Samples. *Journal of Forensic Science*. March (53)2:342-348.

4Morgan, J. (2008). Comparison of Cervical Os versus Vaginal Evidentiary Findings During Sexual Assault Exam. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*. April 342:102-105.

See Sexual Assault Protocol Algorithm for Bulloch, Jenkins, Effingham and Screven Counties on the LAST page specifically for reporting and non-reporting cases for all four counties.

PROTOCOL FOR STATESBORO REGIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER (SRSAC)

I. General

1. If SRSAC is the first point of contact, the advocate advises the victim of the options available.
 - a. If the victim is not calling in regards to a recent sexual assault, the advocate assesses their needs quickly and refers them to the proper resource as defined in the official SRSAC victim Advocate Manual.
 - b. If the victim does not want law enforcement involved or a forensic exam conducted, crisis intervention will be provided by telephone or in person. The advocate can meet the victim at the appropriate law enforcement agency for a safe space to provide crisis intervention. Referrals will be made for physical and mental

health services.

2. If law enforcement is the first to be notified and determines if a medical forensic examination is needed, the victim can have a choice in consenting to a medical forensic examination or not, either as a reporting or non-reporting case. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (henceforth referred to as SANE) will be contacted via the 24-hour crisis line. (CRISIS LINE NUMBER: 1-866-489-2225) by law enforcement. The SANE will then use the crisis line to contact the advocate.
3. Sexual assault advocates are prohibited from transporting victims.
4. The advocate arrives at the designated location for services:
 - a. The exam will take place at The Teal House, 209 South College Street, within 45 minutes of receiving the call. The advocate may also report to the local hospital emergency room, if necessary.
5. During the forensic medical examination, the SANE is the primary interviewer of the victim. The interview occurs, when possible, with the advocate present, in order to avoid duplicate interviews.
6. When the forensic medical examination is completed, the advocate provides clothing for the victim to wear home. A supply of clothing, toiletries, and snacks are kept at The Teal House. Snacks are not to be given to the victim until evidence is collected from the victim's mouth.
7. The advocate gives the victim and his/her family a packet of materials for coping strategies, information about Rape Trauma Syndrome, the legal system, victim Compensation Program, and SRSAC services.
8. The advocate will fill out all required SRSAC paperwork.
 - a. The Client Form should be filled out as thoroughly as possible. All of the information for this form is covered during the SANE interview and the victim should not be asked to repeat any of the information unless absolutely necessary.
 - b. The Permission to Contact Form is used in follow-up only. If the victim refuses to sign, the advocate will respect this and document the refusal.
 - c. The advocate will explain victim's compensation to the victim. Signing the form does not guarantee financial assistance but allows the victim to file in the future if necessary.
 - d. The Performance Measures Surveys are optional. The advocate will explain to the victim that by completing these surveys, he/she is helping SRSAC provide better services.
9. The advocate will coordinate follow-up services, communication, and support as necessary for the victim.

10. The advocate will report any information pertaining to the victim to SRSAC for data collection.
11. The advocate will remain with the victim until all immediate needs regarding transportation, alternative housing, and prescriptions have been met.
12. All advocates will remain current in their training on appropriate policies and procedures of SRSAC.

CONCLUSION

Summary: It is essential to have effective communication among the Ogeechee Circuit District Attorney's office and the Victim's Services Program, the Emergency Room, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement Agencies, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, Georgia Southern University and Statesboro Regional Sexual Assault Center, Inc. in order to provide the victim with the best possible support. This could include, but not limited to:

- Sharing information that may be pertinent, such as changes in scheduling or status of cases according to agency protocols.
- Providing consistent information to the victim and/or family concerning the legal process.
- Referring to appropriate services, such as, Medical, Legal and Mental Health; and
- Filing for victim Compensation for expenses.
- All agencies listed in this document are accountable for maintaining and implementing this protocol. They agree to meet when summoned by the Chair of the Sexual Assault Protocol Committee for Bulloch, Jenkins, Effingham and Screven Counties, Lily Gray.

This 2022 Interim Protocol is effective this 1st day of January, 2022 pending implementation of the revised Protocol voted on by the necessary community partners.