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STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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Vision:

Individuals who have been sexually assaulted will be the central focus in the Cuyahoga County Sexual Assault Response Team's immediate, consistent and multidisciplinary response to sexual violence while working toward eliminating sexual violence in the community.

Mission:

The Cuyahoga County Sexual Assault Response Team is a multidisciplinary collaborative dedicated to promoting societal intolerance of sexual assault in the community. The collaborative supports the rights and choices of those who have been sexually assaulted throughout their involvement with health, social and justice systems, while working to effectively prosecute and hold offenders accountable for their actions.

Guiding Principles:

In pursuing its mission and vision, the Cuyahoga County SART will:

- 1) Provide equal access to services for all individuals who have been sexually assaulted regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- 2) Develop and maintain professional relationships through respectful communication and cross-disciplinary education among team members.
- 3) Educate professionals within the health, social and justice systems, and community at-large in order to overcome the silence and stigma surrounding sexual assault.
- 4) Establish and implement countywide standards of practice to ensure consistent responses from providers who will be held accountable to the standards.
- 5) Inform individuals about their rights and choices with regard to health care, social services and the justice system.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

1. Law Enforcement: Patrol Officer/Deputy/Uniformed Officer

The law enforcement officer responds to the assault call, advises the victim about medical services available to her or him, and interviews the victim. The responding officer obtains the forensic kit from the hospital, collects evidence, and submits a written report.

1.1 STANDARD: ASSESSMENT

The law enforcement officer shall provide an accurate and thorough assessment of the reported crime.

Rationale: Assessment is a series of systematic, organized and deliberate action steps to identify and obtain evidence to ascertain the victim's inability to give consent (due to age, disability, or intoxication), or the use of force during the crime. The assessment also includes identification and examination of the suspect when possible.

Outcome: Appropriate evidence is collected and secured. This is conducted in an atmosphere that is sensitive to the victim's trauma.

Measurement Criteria:

The law enforcement officer:

- Follows departmental investigation procedures.
- Screens for the immediate medical needs of the victim and transports or arranges for necessary transport to a medical facility with the victim's consent.
- Conducts a preliminary interview of the victim.
- Conducts the victim assessment.
- Requests additional resources to investigate the crime and collect evidence.
- Obtains all pertinent information from witnesses.
- Identifies and collects clothing and other crime scene evidence as determined by the history of the assault.
- Explains available basic services and follow-up care.
- Explains that an examination within 72 hours is necessary for evidence collection and if delayed, that apprehending and prosecuting the assailant may be adversely affected.
- Informs the victim that s/he can withdraw consent or terminate the examination at any point.
- Explains the basic steps of the investigation.
- Provides the victim with the *Crime Victims' Rights Handbook*, as mandated by Ohio Revised Code §2930 (also available in Spanish).
- Consults with the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)/Health Care Provider regarding the presenting situation.
- Participates in the interdisciplinary interview portion of the medical-legal examination with the victim's consent.
- Addresses safety issues and provides information regarding protection orders if the victim/suspect relationship falls under the domestic violence code.
- Secures evidence pursuant to department policy.

- If the officer has any questions or concerns regarding protocol at the Emergency Department, s/he should refer to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) *Ohio Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic and Medical Examination*.

Officer Processes Suspect:

The law enforcement officer:

- Identifies the suspect by victim statement, curbside lineup, photo lineup, live lineup or investigative follow-up.
- Develops probable cause for arrest.
- Performs a suspect assessment for the purpose of evidence collection, physical appearance, clothing, and non-genital trauma.
- Informs the SANE about details of the assault prior to the medical-legal examination.
- Ensures the safety of the SANE during the medical-legal examination.

1.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical service.

Outcome: The officer provides services with the objective of obtaining information for a thorough report, collecting evidence, and providing referral in an environment that is non-judgmental and maintains respect for the dignity of the person.

Measurement Criteria:

The law enforcement officer:

- Ensures that victims receive information about victims rights per Ohio Revised Code §2930.
- Respects the human dignity and the uniqueness of the victim, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains respect for the victim in interdisciplinary communications.
- Maintains appropriate confidentiality of records, photographs and communications while ensuring that all records are promptly and properly transferred as required to appropriate persons or institutions.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Follows the proper chain of custody rules when collecting, securing and turning over evidence.
- Secures photographs in a locked space and handles them with respect and dignity for the victim.
- Provides the victim with a follow-up card with his or her name, badge number, and contact information.
- Obtains required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

2. Law Enforcement: Investigator

The investigator gathers evidence in order to conduct a fair, impartial, sensitive and professional criminal investigation.

2.1 STANDARD: EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Rationale: Clear, complete evidence to the facts of the case facilitates the judgment by the prosecutor to issue the case and proceed through the judicial process

Outcome: Provides evidence to the prosecutor that resolves the investigation by demonstrating identity, the victim's inability to give consent (due to age, disability or intoxication) or the use of force or threat of force.

Measurement Criteria:

The investigator:

- Maintains a victim-focused approach.
- Provides choices and options to the victim whenever possible.
- Provides the victim with time to process the information.
- Demonstrates sensitivity by using non-judgmental questions, comments and body language.
- Validates and normalizes the victim's rape trauma and post traumatic stress disorder symptoms.
- Provides the victim with timely updates on the status of the investigation.
- Interviews the victim and witnesses.
- Advises the victim of his/her right to an advocate or support person.
- Provides the victim with a business card.
- Returns calls from the victim or his/her advocate in a timely manner.
- Provides referrals to social service agencies as appropriate.
- Obtains the report from the SANE regarding the medical-legal examination.
- Establishes elements of the crime by testimony and/or evidence.
- Prepares the investigative report and witness statements.
- Assesses evidence and submits lab service requests based on the case history and the potential impact of possible lab results.
- Presents the case to the municipal and/or county prosecutor.
- Keeps his/her supervisor informed of the status of cases.
- Facilitates communication within the department and among members of the interdisciplinary SART.

Investigator Processes Suspects

The investigator:

- Questions suspects, obtains arrest warrants and/or search warrants.
- Obtains, examines, and preserves physical evidence from suspects.
- Obtains suitable photographs for photographic line-up.
- Arranges for a line-up when appropriate.
- Submits lab requests.
- Appears and testifies in court when subpoenaed.

2.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice is based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling.

Outcome: The investigator gathers evidence while maintaining ethical principles.

Measurement Criteria:

The investigator:

- Ensures that victims understand their legal rights.
- Maintains appropriate confidentiality of records, photographs and communications.
- Respects the human dignity and uniqueness of the victim, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains sensitivity for the victim in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Follows the chain of custody rules when collecting, identifying, preserving and impounding all evidence.
- Secures photographs in a locked space, handles them with respect and dignity for the victim and reveals the photographs only to those who need to know.
- Discusses the best way to contact the victim to ensure privacy.
- Allows the victim the opportunity to choose where and when (from among options) the follow-up interview will occur.
- Avoids coercive verbal and non-verbal techniques.
- Uses non-judgmental questions, comments and body language.
- Informs the victim when the arrest is made and when the defendant is released on bail.
- Communicates to the appropriate providers throughout the judicial process to facilitate processing the case.
- Obtains the required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

3. Health Care Provider: Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)

3.1 STANDARD: ASSESSMENT

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner provides an accurate and thorough assessment of the physical and psychosocial status of the patient, based upon data collected, and related to forensic health care needs.

Rationale: Assessment of the patient is a series of systematic, organized and deliberate actions to identify and obtain data, and/or collect evidence. This assessment provides the database to determine the plan of care for the patient.

Outcome: A valid and comprehensive medical-legal examination is conducted by a specially educated Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.

Measurement Criteria:

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE):

- Explains the medical-legal examination in terms appropriate to the developmental age and anxiety level of the patient.
- Ensures that the patient understands the medical-legal process before obtaining written consent to proceed.
- Ensures a guardian or conservator is contacted for the severely disabled patient or one who is otherwise unable to give informed consent (consent for the examination is assumed with an unconscious patient).
- Provides a medical-legal examination on an older adolescent minor without parent or guardian present and/or with consent.
- Provides notification to a minor's guardian per *Ohio Department of Health Ohio Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic and Medical Examination*.
- Ensures that the female patient has reached Tanner stage 4 and the male patient has reached Tanner stage 5.
- Communicates with law enforcement per mandatory reporting laws.
- Informs the patient of his/her right to have an advocate from the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center and/or another support person in attendance during the medical-legal examination, and supports the patient's choice in this matter.
- Performs the initial assessment in a timely manner.
- Assesses the patient's understanding and needs throughout the medical-legal examination.
- Conducts the forensic examination according to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) *Ohio Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic and Medical Examination Guidelines*.
- Refers the patient for further medical care based on the patient's request or medical findings.
- Provides required written and photographic documentation to the state and law enforcement with the patient's consent, according to the ODH evidence collection guidelines.
- Works with the advocate to help the patient identify personal supports for medical, psychological, social and spiritual needs.
- Provides appropriate referrals for follow-up care and counseling for all patients.
- Maintains confidentiality of records, photographs and communications.
- Informs patient of their rights with regard to speaking with law enforcement and/or making a report.

3.2 STANDARD: FORENSIC CONCLUSION

The SANE analyzes the assessment data and determines a forensic plan based on the interview and objective and subjective physical findings.

Rationale: Data analysis provides vital input for health care referral and for legal processing.

Outcome: A systematic process of forensic assessment and data analysis is reflected in the plan of care.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Obtains data in the medical-legal exam to make an analysis.
- Utilizes current bodies of knowledge and the experience of the SANE.
- Identifies notable medical and physical findings and their relation to the history.
- Reviews photographic documentation findings.
- Understands that the absence of physical injury does NOT rule out sexual assault nor does the presence of injury prove that assault occurred.

3.3 STANDARD: PLANNING

The SANE develops a comprehensive plan of action for the patient specific to medical-legal interventions in order to achieve expected outcomes.

Rationale: Safe and effective forensic interventions result from deliberative planning toward individual outcomes. Planning is based on scientific and conceptual knowledge of science, forensic science and nursing care plans in addition to assessment data.

Outcome: Evidence of a plan of action exists for medical-legal issues for each patient.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Involves the patient when determining the plan of action.
- Bases the plan of action on the data collected during the medical forensic examination and data obtained from law enforcement, family, and friends as appropriate.
- Obtains the patient's consent to talk to family and friends.
- Identifies and prioritizes the interventions and outcomes.
- Participates in an interdisciplinary approach.
- Adheres to current forensic practice.
- Evidences teaching health promoting principles to the victim.
- Documents additions to and deviations from the standardized plan of care.
- Provides appropriate health referrals.
- Works with the advocate and patient to identify a support system for medical, psychosocial and spiritual needs.
- Provides information and referrals to community agencies.

3.4 STANDARD: IMPLEMENTATION

The SANE implements a plan of action based on medical-legal issues derived from patient assessment data, conclusions, health history, and the SANE's scientific knowledge and experience. The plan is implemented and evaluated to allow for revision if the interventions are not achieving the expected outcome.

Rationale: Interventions are intended to help achieve the expected outcome and are based on scientific evidence, research and experience.

Outcome: Implementation is conducted in a safe and timely manner. Evaluation is done concurrently and retrospectively to ensure that an acceptable quality of services is provided.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Explains procedures for the medical-legal examination and obtains the patient's informed consent for the examination, photographs, specimens, and with the patient's consent, communications with law enforcement concerning the results of the examination.
- Works with the advocate in providing crisis intervention and emotional care.
- Explains the findings to the patient.
- Provides medical treatment according to the CDC, State of Ohio and local guidelines.
- Provides health promoting self-care education.
- Refers for follow-up care as appropriate with written discharge instructions and health promotion information.
- Documents interventions.
- Testifies regarding the forensic examination.
- Collaborates with the other disciplines of the S.A.R.T. in determining the plan of care.
- Evaluates the plan systematically and continuously.
- Revises the plan and interventions based on the patient's response and input.
- Documents the patient's response.

3.5 STANDARD: COLLABORATION

The SANE contributes to the professional development of peers, colleagues and others on the interdisciplinary team.

Rationale: Improved communications and understanding among the disciplines involved helps improve the care of the sexual assault patient and leads to a more satisfied service provider.

Outcome: The county-wide interdisciplinary SART system holds regular meetings which provide a forum for interactions among the SART team members.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Attends or reads the minutes of the SART meeting.
- Maintains open communication with the interdisciplinary team with a timely response to phone calls and e-mails.

- Attends cross-trainings by advocates, law enforcement officers, and attorneys.
- Presents cases from an examiner's perspective in training sessions.
- Holds membership in a professional forensic organization.
- Debriefs with the advocate and law enforcement.

3.6 STANDARD: RESOURCE UTILIZATION

The SANE considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, cost and mobilization of the patient's resources in planning and delivering forensic services.

Rationale: Timeliness, safety, cost effectiveness and mobilization of the patient's own resources improves the services for the patient and helps to sustain SANE services.

Outcome: The SANE considers multiple options in planning care and chooses or assists the patient in choosing options. The SANE facility has annual goals for quality improvement.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Coordinates with the advocate and/or hospital case management or social worker for the most efficient resource utilization.
- Considers timeliness, safety, cost effectiveness and mobilization of the victim's own resources.
- Provides feedback and recommendations appropriately to streamline the provision of care.
- Identifies deficiencies in providing forensic care to victims and suspects.
- Identifies options for resolving deficiencies and improving care.

The SANE facility:

- Employs a coordinator who is responsible for overseeing training, certification and the scheduling of nurse examiners.
- Maintains a team of prepared SANEs for on-call coverage, 24 hours per day/7 days per week.
- Maintains special equipment for photographic purposes.
- Maintains protocol for the maintenance of chain of custody rules of evidence.
- Maintains a locked cupboard for charts and other evidence.
- Reviews protocols for the medical-legal examination and updates it annually according to recommendations from agencies such as the Center for Disease Control, Ohio Department of Health and Bureau of Criminal Investigations.
- Provides a system for the SANE to obtain a second opinion.

3.7 STANDARD: SUPPORT

The Cuyahoga County Sexual Assault Response Team and Local Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners provides support necessary to medical facilities without SANE Protocols and SANEs available.

Rationale: Sharing resources will improve service delivery in medical facilities without SANE programs.

Outcome: The SANE and County SART provide regular education on state, county and local standard protocols to medical facilities without SANE Programs.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Offers annual or as needed education on state, county and local protocols for medical-legal evaluations for sexual assault.
- Invites medical personnel who are deemed sexual assault specialists in Cuyahoga County hospitals to county-wide education opportunities that are provided by the SART.
- Completes a protocol to educate patients with the complaint of sexual assault about SANE programs.
- Facilitates a referral plan for the emergency department personnel of non-SANE hospitals.

3.8 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical care.

Outcome: SANE practice is based on ethical principles in the Codes of Ethics for Nurses and Physicians.

Measurement Criteria:

The SANE:

- Obtains appropriate informed consent from the patient.
- Allows the patient to withdraw consent or to terminate the examination with full knowledge of the implications of that decision.
- Respects the human dignity and uniqueness of the victim, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains patient confidentiality.
- Maintains respect for patient in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Maintains a secure chain of custody.
- Provides expert testimony for the prosecution and defense when subpoenaed
- Obtains required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

4. Health Care Provider: Nurse or Physician at a Non-SANE Facility

4.1 STANDARD: ASSESSMENT

Rationale: Sexual assault patients may choose to be treated at medical facilities without SANE programs.

Outcome: Patients are treated at the location of their choice.

Measurement Criteria:

The health care provider:

- Informs the patient of facilities with SANE programs.
- Explains the services available to the patient.
- Explains that an examination is necessary for medical-legal evaluation and evidence collection and the effects an evidence collection examination may have on the apprehension and prosecution of the assailant.
- Ensures the patient understands his/her rights to be seen at facility of his/her choice.

If the patient chooses to go to a SANE facility, the health care provider:

- Provides the initial medical exam prior to the patient transfer to the SANE facility per EMTALA Regulations, with sensitivity to the importance of physical evidence that may be present on the patient and his/her clothing.
- Explains to the medically-cleared patient that s/he can transfer by private car to SANE facility.
- Offers other options for transportation as necessary.
- Calls the SANE facility to notify the appropriate persons that a patient is requesting a forensic examination and provides information regarding the mode of arrival.
- Consults with the SANE regarding the presenting situation, the crime scene, and other information that would help to focus on specific evidence collection details.

If the patient chooses to remain at the non-SANE facility, the health care provider:

- Consults with the SANE regarding any special needs of the patient.
- Completes the forensic exam with sensitivity and competence as per Ohio Department of Health *Ohio Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic and Medical Examination*.

4.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical care.

Outcome: Health care provider practice is based on ethical principles in the Codes of Ethics for Nurses and Physicians.

Measurement Criteria:

The health care provider:

- Obtains appropriate informed consent from the patient.
- Allows the patient to withdraw consent or to terminate the examination with full knowledge of the implications of that decision.
- Respects the human dignity and uniqueness of the victim, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains patient confidentiality.
- Maintains respect for the patient in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Maintains a secure chain of custody.
- Obtains the required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

5. Crisis Care Provider: Cleveland Rape Crisis Center Volunteer Advocate

The advocate is a volunteer who has completed a minimum of 48 hours of specialized advocacy training. The advocate's primary role during the medical-legal examination at the hospital or during the initial reporting process at the police station is to provide emotional support to the survivor. They also provide advocacy, basic crisis intervention, information about options, referrals to other social service agencies, and follow-up as requested.

5.1 STANDARD: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Rationale: Advocates provides support, advocacy, crisis intervention, information and referrals to the survivor during the medical and investigative processes at the hospital or police department.

Outcome: The survivor receives support, advocacy, crisis intervention, information and referrals.

Measurement Criteria:

The volunteer advocate:

- Successfully completes the required 40 hour CRCC training and the additional 8 hour advocacy training.
- Participates in the shadowing process.
- Arrives in a timely manner from the time of the request.
- Greets the survivor, introduces self and explains the advocate's role.
- Offers the survivor a choice of whether or not the advocate stays.
- Removes her/himself from any part of the process the survivor does not want the advocate to attend.
- Provides crisis intervention and emotional support to the survivor during the medical-legal exam and/or police report.
- Provides information to the survivor so that s/he can make informed decisions.
- Advocates on behalf of the survivor's rights when necessary and appropriate.
- Does not participate in evidence collection for the SANE.
- Does not remain in the examination room alone with evidence.
- Defers to the choice of the survivor when presented with conflicting needs.
- Offers comfort measures during and after the medical-legal examination (clothing, food or drink).
- Acts as a liaison between the survivor and SART members with the survivor's consent.
- Provides support for the family and/or friends of the survivor.
- Assesses the sense of safety at the time of discharge and helps with safety planning.
- Does not transport the survivor.
- Does not go to the survivor's home.
- Does not offer or give the survivor money.
- Provides a follow-up phone call to the survivor at the survivor's request.
- Provides referrals to the survivor for follow-up services.

5.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical care.

Outcome: The volunteer advocate provides services while maintaining ethical principles.

Measurement Criteria:

The volunteer advocate:

- Respects the human dignity and uniqueness of the survivor, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains confidentiality.
- Maintains respect for the survivor in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Obtains the required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

6. Justice System Advocate: Cleveland Rape Crisis Center or Cuyahoga County Witness/Victim Service Center

The Justice System Advocate is a professional who supports the survivor throughout the criminal justice process.

6.1 STANDARD: ADVOCACY

Rationale: Justice System Advocates provides support, advocacy, crisis intervention, information and referrals to the survivor during the criminal justice process. Advocates also provide information to the survivor about crime victims' rights under the Ohio Revised Code §2930.

Outcome: Survivors receive support, advocacy, crisis intervention, information about available options and their rights, and referrals during the criminal justice process.

Measurement Criteria:

The justice system advocate:

- Provides advocacy services as requested by the survivor.
- Assesses the survivor's needs and supports individual decisions.
- Provides crisis intervention and emotional support as needed.
- Facilitates access to ongoing services as needed.
- Informs the survivor of their rights and responsibilities as specified in the Ohio Revised Code §2930.
- Provides information and/or referrals to the survivor about the criminal and civil justice system.
- Accompanies the survivor to interviews and court appearances.
- Provides information about the *Ohio Victims of Crime Compensation Program*.

6.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical care.

Outcome: The justice system advocate abides by the National Organization of Victim Assistance Code of Ethics, and acts with integrity, treating all survivors of crime with dignity and compassion.

Measurement Criteria:

The justice system advocate:

- Respects the human dignity and uniqueness of the survivor, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains confidentiality as permitted by law.
- Maintains respect for survivor in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Obtains the required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.

7. Prosecutor

7.1 STANDARD: JUDICIAL PROCESSING

Rationale: The Prosecutor's Office reviews each criminal case, makes a decision about charges, and prosecutes offenders to hold them accountable for their crimes.

Outcome: The victim is provided information throughout the judicial process.

Measurement Criteria:

The prosecutor's office:

- Utilizes a vertical prosecution model.
- Evaluates cases submitted by law enforcement.
- Determines if sufficient credible evidence exists to support prosecution.
- Identifies the victim as Jane or John Doe until it is necessary to reveal the name according to the court rules.
- Provides the victim with a business card and the preferred time and method of contact once a prosecutor is assigned to a case and upon initial personal contact.
- Provides information to the victim about the criminal justice system and the victim's role.
- Informs the victim of the status of the case from the time of indictment to sentencing.
- Provides information about justice system advocacy.
- Informs the victim of his/her right to have a support person present during interviews and in court.
- Responds to inquiries by the victim as soon as possible.
- Includes the victim's concerns whenever possible in decisions regarding the filing of the case, the reduction of charges, plea bargain offers, dismissal or other possible case dispositions.
- Calls the attention of the court to the views of the victim on bail decisions, continuances, plea bargains, dismissals, sentencing and restitution.
- Seeks protection orders or no contact orders as conditions of bond.
- Pursues to the fullest extent that the law allows, those defendants who harass, threaten or otherwise attempt to intimidate or retaliate against victims and witnesses.
- Explains the reasons for continuances and seeks mutually agreeable dates for hearings that are rescheduled.
- Attempts to expedite case dispositions.
- Arranges for the prompt return of the victim's property under direct control if it is no longer needed as evidence.
- Provides a waiting area separate from the defendant and the defendant's family for use during court proceedings, if possible.
- Arranges for interpreting services for victims and witnesses as needed.
- Provides information about directions, parking, courthouse and courtroom locations, transportation assistance and witness fees.
- Provides assistance in making travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-state victims.
- Informs the victim about his/her legal right to provide a Victim Impact Statement.

7.2 STANDARD: ETHICS

Rationale: Practice based on the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, confidentiality and truth telling are basic to ethical service.

Outcome: The prosecutor's office follows judicial procedures while maintaining ethical principles.

Measurement Criteria:

The Prosecutor's Office:

- Ensures that victims have an understanding of their legal rights.
- Respects the human dignity and the uniqueness of the victim, unrestricted by considerations of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion or other personal characteristics.
- Maintains appropriate confidentiality.
- Maintains respect for the victim in interdisciplinary communication.
- Reports appropriately according to local, state and federal mandates.
- Obtains the required training and updates to serve the sexual assault population.
- Provides input and recommendations to the SART as an interdisciplinary member.