

County of Santa Clara
Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System
Santa Clara Valley Medical Center



104309

DATE: January 19, 2021
TO: Health and Hospital Committee
FROM: Paul E. Lorenz, Chief Executive Officer, SCVH
SUBJECT: Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to status updates for the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications with the receipt of this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

On June 24, 2020, the Health and Hospital Committee received a report from the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center on the Adult/Adolescent SAFE Program expansion. The Committee requested at that time that Administration return with a periodic interval progress report. This report summarizes the actions taken and the progress of the SAFE Program during the second half of 2020.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/no/neutral child impact.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/no/neutral senior impact.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/no/neutral sustainability implications.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC) Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Program continues to work on expansion goals to provide SAFE services to survivors in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. This report provides an update on those efforts from July through December 2020.

Four new examiner positions, approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2019, were filled with exceptional candidates, committed to the goals of expansion and dynamic nature of the work, without compromising the survivor or SAFE team needs. These new codes have created a core management staff that can flex between office needs and exam coverage in a way that has not previously been available.

Increasing the number of SAFE examiners with a goal of “deepening the bench” has also continued. Training of new examiners has been impacted by COVID as well as the retirement of two long-time examiners. Despite these challenges, there are currently 18 examiners and three (3) staff to cover SAFE response, plus 12 trainees, who are expected to be independent by March 2021. Medical forensic training through the California Clinical Forensic Medical Training Center (CCFMTC) has also changed due to COVID restrictions on gathering. CCFMTC has revised their curriculum to an all-online program. This eliminated the hands-on skills training, usually covered by CCFMTC, and pushed it onto the exam teams to develop and complete.

Since February 2020, SCVMC SAFE response in the North County has continued without disruption, with most exams conducted in the Stanford Emergency Department. Given the strong collaborative support provided by Stanford Health Care, the SCVMC SAFE team has been able to respond to additional cases in inpatient settings as well. A similar response in the South County was planned to begin at St. Louise Hospital in March 2020 but was postponed when hospital space was emergently reallocated for COVID needs. Response to the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) at 455 O’Connor Drive, San Jose is anticipated to begin in March 2021, when the new site is opened. This site will provide services to youth and children who have experienced physical and sexual abuse. Most medical services at the CAC will be managed by the Pediatric SAFE team but the Adult/Adolescent SAFE team will respond to provide acute SAFE exams for youth 12 through 17 years of age to support the coordination of care in one location.

Expansion has included improving response to other counties that currently bring survivors to Santa Clara County for exams. In August 2020, SCVMC SAFE response began in Santa Cruz County in collaboration with Dominican Hospital. Partnerships with both Dominican Hospital administration and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office have been key in creating a smooth transition to start SAFE services in Santa Cruz County, despite a go-live date that unavoidably coincided with extreme fire activity and worsening COVID restrictions. Though not an ideal start date, further delay would have negatively impacted both survivors seeking care and emergency response personnel who could not leave the county to accompany them. At this time, there is no SAFE Program in San Benito County, so survivors are brought to SCVMC for their medical forensic care and SAFE exams. Once SAFE services are available in South Santa Clara County, San Benito County agencies will be able to access SAFE services there.

In addition to expanding the response for survivors of sexual assault, the SCVMC SAFE Program has been involved with a pilot program that began January 1, 2020 to evaluate the benefit of medical forensic exams for survivors of strangulation without sexual assault. An

update for this pilot will be reported separately to the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee in February 2021.

Data collection and ongoing analysis during the expansion continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes and look for opportunities to improve the program. Planning and procurement work is beginning in February 2020 to develop a database through the Santa Clara County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Committee. This will create a single platform to collect and aggregate data from SART partner agencies, including the SAFE Program, to measure, evaluate and identify gaps in the County response to survivors of sexual violence.

SCVMC SAFE Program Permanent Staffing

Coded Positions

All five of the coded positions have been filled. The additional Nurse Coordinator code has been instrumental to maintain sufficient coverage on day shift, which is consistently the busiest shift. The new Staff Developer code, filled mid-2020, has been critical to adapting skills training and meeting annual competency goals, especially with the gathering restrictions as a result of COVID. The Nurse Manager code allows for broader operational oversight of the program and creates opportunity to strengthen community relationships, which is especially important as we navigate the needs of our patients seeking services during COVID. These positions have also provided stability to the on-call staff, who must navigate the numerous and rapidly changing instructions related to personal protective equipment (PPE), screening, visitation and accompaniment, and workflow changes for themselves and responding SART agencies.

SAFE/SANE Training

SAFE/SANES

There are currently 13 examiners in Santa Clara County and five (5) in Santa Cruz County, three of which can flex response between counties. SAFE staff provide back up for case coverage and changes to the schedule; however, the number of available SAFE examiners are below our target. With the current 12 trainees, who are expected to be independent by March 2021, it is anticipated that will increase to 20 SAFE examiners in Santa Clara County and 10 in Santa Cruz County. Due to a variety of COVID-related issues, the number of trainees, who chose not to complete the training, significantly increased in the last half of 2020.

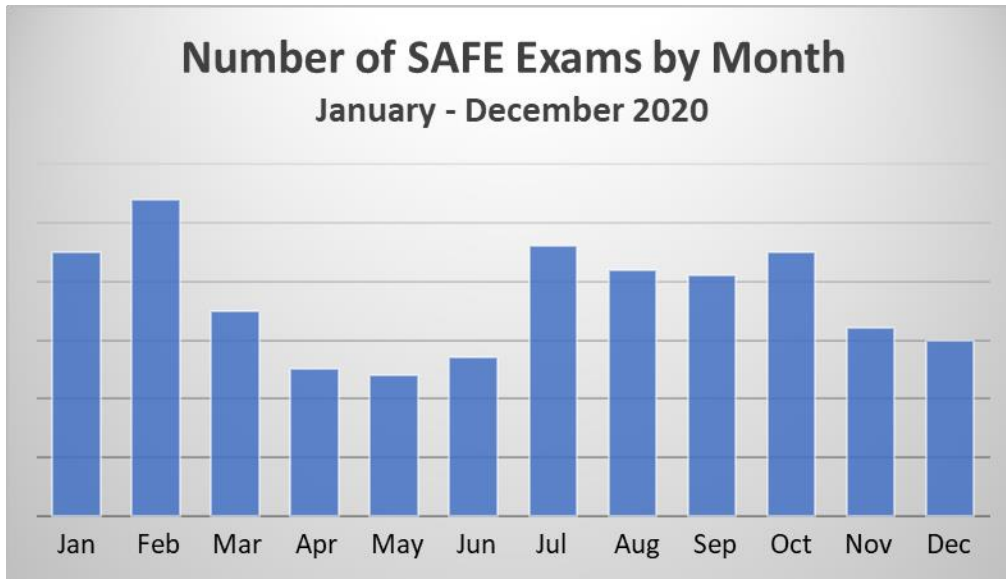
The SAFE Staff Developer is working closely with Nursing Educational Services to create new opportunities for hands-on skills training, previously available through the CCFMTC, and on-line training to expedite on boarding of new examiners. Additionally, grant opportunities for development of simulated SAFE exams and curriculum are being explored.

SCVMC SAFE Response Locations in Santa Clara County

SCVMC

After an increase of 21% in the number of cases in the first quarter (Q1) of 2020, over the same time period in 2019, there was a significant drop in cases beginning late March 2020. This continued through May 2020, in conjunction with shelter in place orders. Cases increased again when the public health orders were relaxed in June. This decrease aligns with what other SAFE teams experienced in California and the country.

Figure 1 – Number of SAFE Exams by Month in 2020



North County

To date, 29 survivors have been provided full medical forensic exams by the SCVMC SAFE Team in the North County, either in the Stanford Health Care (SHC) Emergency Department or inpatient setting. Having the capability to respond to the North County removes the additional burden on a survivor, who may not wish to transfer to another location for a SAFE exam.

Law enforcement agencies (LEA) are aware of the SAFE response location in the North County, but education and optimization are ongoing to improve appropriate utilization of that site. In 2020, there were nine (9) cases that could have gone to SHC, based on the jurisdictional agency, but initial review shows only four (4) were brought in by LEA when they could have gone to SHC. Others were based on where the survivor initially presented.

South County

A call is scheduled with St. Louise Hospital administration in January 2021 to revisit the plan and timing for SCVMC SAFE response there. This is anticipated to begin by summer,

depending on the continued COVID resource needs.

SCVMC SAFE Response in Santa Cruz County

Most medical forensic exams are provided at a confidential clinic location with access to Dominican Emergency Department. After opening on August 24, 2020, a total of 24 cases were conducted in Santa Cruz during the last four months of 2020. This is compared to 31 cases conducted at SCVMC for Santa Cruz agencies in the first eight months of 2020. Collaborative work involving SCVMC, County dispatch, Dominican Hospital, pharmacy, and law enforcement continues to optimize workflows and address issues, with all partners working together to ensure success. The SAFE Program provides outreach and education to SART partners through online trainings and in SART Committee meetings, held every two months.

SCVMC SAFE Response in San Benito County

Pursuant to PC §13823.9(b), the SCVMC SAFE Program has provided services for San Benito County Sheriff Department and Hollister Police Department for most or all of the time the program has been in existence. A draft agreement is being finalized to include the South County response location and will replace the memorandum of understanding with San Benito County that has historically been followed. Once the South County response location is open, SAFE services will be available within a 15-20 minute drive for the survivor and all first responders involved. In 2020, four (4) survivors from San Benito County were provided SAFE exams at SCVMC. It is anticipated that more survivors will seek care once the more conveniently located South County location is available for SAFE exams. Outreach and education are provided to SART Partners by the SAFE Program during the South County SART Committee meetings, held every two months.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Health and Hospital Committee would not receive the requested information.

LINKS:

- Linked From: 105034 : Receive report from the Health and Hospital Committee relating to the meeting of January 19, 2021. (Simitian)
- Linked From: 106814 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) services at all SAFE response sites.
- Linked From: 107293 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) services at all SAFE response sites.
- Linked From: 107681 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to status updates for the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program.
- Linked From: 108044 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC) relating to status updates for the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Program.

- Linked From: 108388 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to status updates for the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program.
- Linked From: 108798 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to status updates for the SAFE Program.
- Linked From: 111659 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to status updates for the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program.
- Linked From: 118794 : Receive report from Santa Clara Valley Medical Center relating to the Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program.