



**DATE:** February 6, 2024

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Paul Lorenz, Chief Executive Officer, Santa Clara Valley Healthcare  
Kasey Halcón, Deputy County Executive, Office of the County Executive

**SUBJECT:** A.6 - Children's Advocacy Center Access and Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Protocol

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At the December 19, 2023 Special Meeting of the Board of Supervisors, the Board requested reports on February 6, 2024, relating to:

- a. Options to ensure the appropriate and adequate staffing levels at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) for all child survivors of abuse to receive medical care from the CAC Medical Team. (Request A.6)
- b. Plans to finalize the updated Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) protocol, including recommendations to complete expansion of coverage for adolescents at the CAC within three to six months. (Request C.3)

### Children's Advocacy Center Access

Santa Clara Valley Healthcare (SCVH) is dedicated to ensuring that every child survivor of abuse receives expert, compassionate, and seamlessly coordinated evaluation and treatment services at the Medical Clinic at the Children's Advocacy Center of Santa Clara County. In response to the Board's directive on December 19, 2023, SCVH is developing new workflows and updating policies and procedures to be able to provide acute adolescent Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) exams for all adolescents aged 12 through 17 years old at the Medical Clinic at the CAC.

Currently, acute – as defined by the criminal act occurring within 10 days or less from the date of report – adolescent patients are referred to emergency care for medical clearance. However, as directed by the Board, and supported by community best practices, with a robust, child-centered, and trauma-informed Children's Advocacy Center in our community, these patients can and should be directed to the CAC for services and treatment. Moving forward, these patients will primarily access medical treatment like the SAFE exam, and services, like confidential victim advocacy, and mental health support, at the Medical Clinic at the CAC except in

emergent situations. It is expected patients will begin receiving care at the CAC on or about March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Adolescents and their families referred through the CAC hotline will undergo initial assessments to determine the appropriate level of care. In emergent cases, prompt referrals will be directed to one of the County's hospital emergency departments, including Stanford Hospital, Saint Louise Regional Hospital, or Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, based on the patient's location preference.

Current data estimates this new patient group will be approximately 100 patients per year, or roughly two per week. CAC medical staff are working with the SCVH Adult/Adolescent (A/A) SAFE team to undergo the required training to ensure the highest standard of care. The staffing levels at the Medical Clinic at the CAC can absorb additional client care however the A/A SAFE on-call team will likely need to provide daytime and after-hours coverage until the CAC medical team is fully trained. SCVH is prioritizing the training of CAC medical staff to expedite patient care at the CAC. As the workflows are revised, SCVH is committed to maintaining the highest standards of patient care, emphasizing efficiency in workflows, and upholding its dedication to delivering high-quality healthcare services.

### **Sexual Assault Response Team Protocol**

Established in 2016, the Santa Clara County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Committee has been enhancing the County's response to sexual assault survivors. The adoption of the Sexual Assault Response Protocol in 2019 marked a milestone for the SART Committee, emphasizing the importance of a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to support survivors in their journey to recovery. Jointly led by a representative from a community rape crisis center and a county sexual assault forensic exam program, the committee comprises members from legal, law enforcement, policy, community, and county sectors, including the leadership of the Children's Advocacy Center. The collective belief among committee members is that a multi-disciplinary response system is vital in providing effective intervention and care, empowering victims to transition to survivors and regain control and dignity post-sexual assault.

For Calendar Years 2023 and 2024, the SART Committee is dedicated to several key focus areas to support an efficient, timely, and trauma-informed response to survivors of gender-based violence, both in protocols and practical implementation. These include formulating a SART Committee work plan, developing real-time case discussion capabilities so barriers and trends can be addressed, submitting a Time

Study Report to CSFC (Children Seniors and Families Committee) that identifies areas for improvement and success in the response of SART partner agencies in 2023, and completing the SART Protocol update.

SCVH and County Administration will work closely with the SART Committee to ensure the protocol update, which shall include important updates to workflows including the integration of the CAC and enhanced alignment with the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Protocol, is revised, updated, and signed by the timeline requested by the Board. The SART Committee will meet again in late January 2024 to continue working towards finalization of the SART Protocol. Concurrently, SCVH staff will work on the development of policies and procedures for adolescent SAFE exams at the Medical Clinic at the CAC, integrating them into the broader SART protocol.