



News from
SALEM COUNTY
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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE ADDRESS SANE VACANCY

(SALEM, NJ)—Freeholder David T. Lindenmuth, Chair of the County Public Safety Committee, Freeholder Beth E. Timberman, Member of the County Public Safety Committee, and Prosecutor John T. Lenahan today announced that plans are in process to reestablish the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program in Salem County. The SANE program is combined with the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and make up the SART/SANE program. The SART/SANE concept is based on a team approach, and one its chief objectives is to ensure that every victim of sexual assault has access to quality health care treatment in a timely manner.

“This program is essential in providing quality care to those who have suffered a personal tragedy,” said Freeholder Lindenmuth. “We are always striving to provide in-county services to those who need it most and we are moving towards this goal with the SANE program.”

On October 1, 2004, Salem County’s only Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner advised the Prosecutor’s Officer that she could no longer participate in the program. The only viable option to ensure sexual assault victims would continue to receive twenty-four hour access to features of the SANE program was to merge with other county programs. The merger required that any victim of sexual assault occurring Salem County, requesting a SANE, would be transported to a SANE facility in Cumberland, Gloucester or Wilmington, Delaware. All county law enforcement agencies received training to implement new procedures regarding the merger.

“The victims of sexual assaults continue to receive all of the healthcare services required by the SART/SANE directive,” said Freeholder Beth Timberman, who is a registered nurse. “While the victims received the care they required, it is vitally important that we have in-county services to address their needs in a timely and effective manner. As a nurse, a mother, and a Freeholder, I was alarmed to hear that we were without a SANE and so we have all been working together to ensure that we rectify this situation as soon as possible.”

Victims not electing to be examined by a SANE receive quality health care in Salem County by the emergency room staff at either Salem Memorial Hospital or South Jersey Healthcare Elmer Hospital.

“The chief reason for the SANE vacancy is that there was no one qualified or available to serve in this capacity,” said Prosecutor John T. Lenahan. “In 2006 there were twenty nine (29) sexual assaults reported, but only one met the criteria established for activation of the Sexual Assault Response Team. We recognize the importance of this program and will work to ensure that we have all the necessary support structures in place in Salem County.”

The Prosecutor’s Office, along with Freeholders Lindenmuth and Timberman, is attempting to reestablish the SANE program in Salem County. Catherine Hirsch, Assistant Chief Nursing Officer of Salem Memorial Hospital, has indicated that several nurses on staff have expressed the desire to become certified SANEs. Several alternatives are being explored to expedite the SANE certification process by utilizing programs established by medical facilities in Camden County and the University of Pennsylvania. Funding for the new SANE certifications are expected from the Office of the Attorney General; however, the Prosecutor’s Office will fund the certifications to facilitate and expedite the return of the SANE program.

“The Salem County SART remains unaffected by the merger of the SANE program,” said Freeholder Timberman. “The team approach to providing services for the victims of sexual assault, as well as investigation of the reported incident, is utilized effectively when the occasion arises.”