

News Release - News release - Idaho State Police implementing federal grants to improve sexual assault evidence collection efforts throughout Idaho

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For Immediate Release, July 26, 2018

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Summary:

Idaho State Police applied for and has now received several federal grants that will be used to improve how sexual assault evidence is collected and processed throughout our state. We know that collection of sexual assault evidence is not performed in a standardized manner around Idaho.

The Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Grant funding of more than \$250,000 will be used to:

- Allow ISP to hire an individual to provide training across Idaho to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and coordinate community Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART). This individual in this new position, once hired, will travel and provide training to SANE nurses across Idaho, providing an estimated 250 Idaho nurses with a basic, 40-hour SANE training course and clinical experience.
- Provide sexual assault evidence collection facilities with adequate equipment and supplies for that purpose.

Idaho State Police is collaborating with numerous government and community partners to ensure the best possible medical and criminal justice resources exist to help Idaho's survivors of sexual assaults. Idaho is a national leader in addressing this important issue and our state has:

- Passed aggressive laws to test and retain sexual assault kits
- Implemented the nation's first, fully functional statewide sexual assault kit tracking system
- Worked to ensure victims of these crimes are cared for without personal cost

We're now working to ensure we have the best-trained nurses and best-organized communities against this crime in the nation. These new grants will make a huge difference towards those goals.

Additional Details / Idaho Legislature efforts and quotes from legislators / Medical facilities' participation:

1. Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFSS) has been awarded two grants through the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women for improving sexual assault evidence collection in Idaho. The Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Grant funding will be used for three purposes.

a. First, \$113,142 was awarded to hire an individual to train Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and coordinate the community Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART)

around the state of Idaho. The SANE/SART Coordinator (SSC) will provide introductory and continuing education to SANE nurses around Idaho including overseeing practical exercises to ensure competency. The SSC will also work with communities all over Idaho to ensure that medical providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and other stakeholders meet together regularly to improve sexual assault investigations all over the state. While SART teams generally exist in larger communities in Idaho, a large focus will be setting up or strengthening SART teams in rural communities in Idaho. While an application is required each year, it is anticipated that the SSC position will be funded for up to four years through this granting program.

b. Second, \$45,000 was awarded to provide an estimated 250 nurses in the state of Idaho the basic 40 hour SANE training course and associated clinical experience. ISPFs will partner with the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) to provide this training in three urban centers around the state and also make the course available via video conference to areas around the state. Any nurse collecting sexual assault evidence in Idaho will be provided with this training free of charge. This introductory training will serve as a springboard for more nurses to apply for certification if they desire. The training will continue to be offered to nurses around the state by the SSC nurse on an as-needed basis. This resource will be a great help to hospitals and clinics as they have staff turnover and also continuing education needs.

c. Third, \$100,000 was awarded to ensure that all hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities where sexual assault kits are collected by medical professionals have adequate equipment and supplies. The needs of each collection site will be evaluated by the SSC, and items such as digital cameras, lighting, evidence dryers, and evidence collection and packaging items will be provided. Complete forensic examination toolkits will be provided in areas where collection sites do not have any of these resources, and specific tools will be provided at other sites to meet their needs. The main focus of this initiative is to help rural hospitals and clinics address their needs so that they can better assist survivors of this crime in their communities.

2. Idaho State Police is committed to making Idaho communities safe. When individuals are victimized in our communities, we want to ensure the best possible medical and criminal justice resources exist to help these survivors. ISP is collaborating with a number of government and community partners on this overall initiative we call SANE250. Partners such as the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Idaho Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance, Idaho Women's and Children's Alliance, Idaho Chiefs of Police Association, Idaho Sheriffs Association, St. Luke's Healthcare, St. Alphonsus Healthcare, and the Idaho Prosecuting Attorney's Association will make this initiative possible. Representative Melissa Wintrow, Representative Maxine Bell and Senator Shawn Keough have already been encouraging local communities to get behind and involved in this initiative.

3. Idaho leads the nation in addressing this important issue. Idaho passed aggressive laws to test and retain kits, implemented the first fully functional statewide sexual assault kit tracking system, worked to ensure survivors of this crime were cared for without cost, and is now working to ensure we have the best trained nurses and most organized communities against this crime in the country. These grants will make a huge difference in the state of Idaho and Idaho State Police is proud to lead on this initiative.

4. Duties and responsibilities of the SSC:

a) Coordinate Idaho statewide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training program.

b) Help communities around Idaho establish and develop Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) and communicate and collaborate with them to ensure for sustainability.

c) Attend SART meetings statewide and facilitate and participate in the discussion as needed.

- d) Facilitate Idaho Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (ISAKI) meetings including facilitation of the scheduling, agenda, notes, and action items.
- e) Account for ISP grant purchased equipment at Sexual Assault Kit collection facilities in Idaho.
- f) Supply sexual assault kit collection facilities in Idaho with collection and packaging supplies.
- g) Coordinate with the ISPFS SAK Tracking Administrator regarding hospital and clinic participation.
- h) Provide introductory and advanced SANE training including adult, adolescent, and pediatric courses and practical exercises.
- i) Coordinate and provide continuing education for SANE trained nurses in Idaho.
- j) Facilitate and conduct SANE/SART conferences as time permits and budget allows. Emphasis will be placed on an annual SANE/SART conference in Idaho.
- k) Work with hospital or clinic administrators to develop or enhance SANE programs.
- l) Provide reports to ISPFS and other stakeholders regarding state SANE/SART programs.
- m) Continuously work with ISPFS biology/DNA unit to identify training necessary at collection sites based on what is being sent to the lab for testing. Implement the training in the areas identified.
- n) Maintain the state sexual assault kit collection protocol and work with stakeholders to ensure an appropriate amount of ongoing review and updates are implemented. Ensure national collection standards are implemented in Idaho protocols.
- o) Provide education to nurses, doctors, and other medical professionals regarding victim centered and trauma informed decision making.
- p) Network Idaho with other states and national organizations to improve sexual assault kit evidence collection.
- q) Participation in long-range planning and policy development related to sexual assault issues in Idaho.
- r) Public speaking and presentations before government officials, healthcare administrators and staff, and other stakeholders.

5. On May 17, 2018, Idaho State Representative Melissa Wintrow wrote a letter to Idaho hospitals which explained her concerns regarding the collection of sexual assault evidence throughout our state. In that letter, she detailed the problems we currently face with it, including:

- a. The distance a victim sometimes needs to travel to receive a post-assault examination
- b. Improperly conducted examinations, in many cases
- c. Lack of specialized training by some of the medical professionals who conduct these examinations

6. Rep. Wintrow's letter, co-signed by State Senator Shawn Keough and State Representative Maxine Bell, explained that Idaho State Police has procured grant funding to launch statewide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training and obtain the necessary equipment and supplies to do so. Quotes about this initiative from the above-named Idaho legislators follow:

a. Rep. Melissa Wintrow/(D-Boise): "Every sexual assault survivor in Idaho should be treated with dignity and respect no matter where they live. We want all Idaho communities to have the tools to treat survivors, collect critical evidence for law enforcement and put offenders behind bars."

b. Rep. Maxine Bell/(R-Jerome): "We value our rural hospitals and the dedicated doctors and nurses who serve our communities every day. The SANE250 initiative will enhance the services our medical centers provide and ensure sexual assault survivors can receive humane and competent care close to home. None of these survivors should have to drive hours away from their friends and family to undergo sexual assault examinations."

c. Sen. Shawn Keough/(R-Sandpoint): "North Idaho hospitals should be equipped with the latest tools and training to help sexual assault survivors get justice. The SANE250 initiative enables medical centers throughout the state to send a message that their communities care deeply about this issue."

7. Hospitals around the state have responded favorably to this request for their participation. To date, the following facilities are on board:

BINGHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - Blackfoot

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL - Cottonwood

VALOR HEALTH - Emmett

NORTH CANYON MEDICAL CENTER - Gooding

ST. JOSEPH RMC - Lewiston

GRITMAN MEDICAL CENTER - Moscow

CLEARWATER VALLEY HOSPITAL - Orofino

ST. LUKE'S (statewide participant)

ST. ALPHONSUS (statewide participant)

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