

## **VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

January 24, 2019

**Attendance:** Liz Briganty Vidal, Ronald Cohen, Cinder Cooper Barnes, Kecia Lopes, Rebecca Marcolini, April Marrone, Kathryn Pontzer, Leah Schwartz, Robin Stimson, Michael Subin, Jennifer Todd and Steven Whitehorn.

**Attendance Via Conference call:** Ellen Alexander and Alana Ward.

**Members Absent:** Teresa Bennett, Pooja Deb, Richard Mackenzie, Anita Pinto, Sally Reid, Sorell Schwartz, Reem Sharaf.

**Support Staff:** Nadja Cabello and Maria Carzon.

### **I. Additions to Agenda**

- VSAB Annual Report.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

- The December 6, 2018 minutes were approved.

### **III. Shady Grove Hospital Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Visit and Board Priorities**

- Jessica Volz gave a tour of the equipment and facility where the SAFE exams are conducted.
- There is a need for rape exams to be available at more than one hospital.
- Robin stated that at Holy Cross Hospital which refuses the SAFE nurses due to religious reasons. Holy Cross Hospital used to do rape kits and could even give the morning after pill but due to a liability issue of nurses and doctors not having a license to provide medication, they will not allow it.
- The SAFE nurses are allowed at the Walter Reed hospital.
- Steven asked if we could get the Attorney General study, Nadja said they might have it at the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA).
- Leah asked if we could invite someone from MCASA to present at our meeting.
- Nadja says the SANE unit has taken more than rape victims. Billing is an issue due to all the different services that are not covered for nonsexual assault victims.
- Ellen asked about the (VHMN) funds for forensic CICB funds.

**Action item:** Maria will send the priorities document to April to update the priorities.

**Action item:** Ellen will look into the VHMN funds.

### **IV. Discuss interest in human trafficking task force**

- Robin says she wants to attend.
- The task force meetings are held at 101 Monroe Street Auditorium once a month on the first Wednesdays 12:00 to 1:30 pm. The subcommittee meetings every other month at the Rockville Library at 11:00 am.
- It is suspected that in Montgomery County the victims are from labor servitude, there are very little numbers on human sex trafficking victims. Nadja has been trying to get CASA de Maryland to attend the meetings.
- Mike says, it happens more where there are casinos closer to I-95, Baltimore or near sports venues, more of sexual trafficking victims. Those type of venues are not in Montgomery County.
- Victims of trafficking get arrested as prostitutes, it takes a very special training to know they are victims.
- BAK contract allows victims of trafficking to stay at the BAK shelter, for 60 days. They ended up recruiting domestic violence victims into prostitution. They have been groomed and they will stay loyal to their pimps. It did not work out well.

**V. Fleet Street Update - April**

- April will take on this task.
- Besides the lead, the zoning issues are too restrictive. Fleet Street is not solving our needs.
- The board agreed to look at other solutions instead of trying to improve Fleet Street.

**VI. One pagers for Board priorities - Robin Stimson**

- The Board Priorities need to be updated for the meetings with the County Executive and the Council.
- **Action Item:** April will update the one page priorities document.

**VII. Facebook Page**

- Liz and Leah want to take on the Facebook page as its not currently moving forward. They want to post at least every two weeks and be responsible for posting.

**Action item:** Robin will contact Reem to get access to the Board Facebook page.

**VIII. Dropbox permissions - Cinder**

The administrative permission to access the Dropbox account is an issue.

- All official documents needs to have a copy in the shared county network drive.
- Rebecca said that we should look into outlook one drive 365. The creator of the document gives permission.

**Action item:** Ellen will look into the one note program with the County.

**IX. Victim Services Directory April, Kathryn, Leah and Cinder**

- Kathryn said organizations are not calling back. They should high light the information of organizations that are not confirmed.
- Ellen offered an intern to help with the project.
- It is also needed to test the hyperlinks and highlight what is not working.
- Marcolini says that organizations that are linked to other organizations are placed in the correct categories. The hyper link should be connected to each category that the organization is linked to. Primary should be what you want to find in the directory secondary is nice but not necessary. Rebecca suggest just placing the website instead of the hyper link.
- Ellen would like to refer victims to programs out there in the community that are more specialized.
- Robin said that this is a job that has been lingering for two years and they want to finish this job.

**Action item:** April will consult with Anita on how they want to proceed on this. They need to make sure that this will not be something that can't be maintained.

**Action item:** Leah and Robin will send their edits to Anita.

**Action item:** Board members will highlight the information of organizations that are not confirmed.

**X. Announcements/Comments/New Business**

- Women's Legislative Briefing Sunday, January 27, 2019
- Nadja handed out the 2019 legislative priorities from MCASA.

Meeting adjourned 9:03 pm.  
Next Meeting: February 28, 2019  
7-9 PM