

VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (VSAB)

October 28, 2021

Attendance: Neda Bolourian, Amos Hicks III, Brian Koosed, Jessica J. Leslie, Kathryn Pontzer, Leah Schwartz, Juanita Rogers, and David Young.

Members Absent: Larry Center, Reem Sharaf.

Ex-Officio Members: Ellen Alexander.

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Dolores Briceno.

Support Staff: Dr. Rafiah Prince and Maria V. Solis.

I. Additions to Agenda

No additions.

II. Roll Call & Virtual Meeting Procedures- Juanita

- The rules for a virtual Board meeting are as follows:
The chair will call the roll to establish a quorum.
Members need to identify themselves when they are talking.
Members may be asked to identify anyone who is present with them during the call.
The public may be asked to mute the call on their end to avoid interruptions.
The public may be muted by the chair.
Public bodies might wish to consider including any ground rules in the meeting notice.

III. Approval of Minutes from June 24, 2021 meeting– Juanita

- The September 2021 Minutes were approved.

IV. Knowledge Share: Serving Victims of Crimes - Guest Speakers: - Juanita Rogers/Kathryn

- **Debbie Feinstein, Esq, Senior Assistant State's Attorney & Chief, Special Victims Division:**
More support to be able to help victim coordinators who work extraordinary hours. Victim coordinators do a lot of training with staff on trauma informed approach and can always use more. Collaboration between agencies within the County is very important when helping victims.
- **Sergeant Jason Bahm Sexual Assault Unit family outreach section.** Has been a police officer for twenty-eight years. Helping people to escape situations that seemed impossible to escape makes a difference. He Works closely with VASAP Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program. There is a gap that needs to be filled is the need to provide “Hope Phones” to victims of sexual assault. The Family Justice Center has phones but those are for the domestic violence unit.
- **Nurse Vania Baioni, from the Forensic Medical Unit of Adventist Shady Grove Medical Center**
Vania has been working on the Forensic unit since 2015, she has had a great experience. She has noticed an increase in victims for domestic violence since the pandemic, strangulation is the most common for domestic violence.
- **Jodi Finkelstein, Human Trafficking Prevention Committee of the Commission for Women**
Serves as a connector and find the gaps and work towards prevention of future gaps. Follows policy legislation that protects survivors of human trafficking.
- **Ashley Noy, Client Assistance Specialist Assistant Client Specialist for domestic violence cases at the Family Justice Center.** Clients that may come to the unit feel safe. There are amenities such as toys for children in a designated area, a kitchen. Etc. The Family Justice center serves females and males. Their staff is bilingual (English and Spanish). The Family Justice Center needs more funding to be able to help more victims because of the case load being so high.

V. Executive Subcommittee updates

- Testimony was sent out to Board Members and, there is an opportunity for the testimony to be reviewed and edited if needed.
- The testimony contains the Board's priority, one of them being the staffing for the programs.
- Dr. Rafiah prepared data to show the increase on caseloads, on therapist needs and intake unit.
- Dorne Hill (HHS Senior Administrator of Crisis Services, Intake and Trauma Services) talked about the increase in intakes.
- Housing priority was also discussed, Dorne Hill mentioned she was having a meeting with Amanda Harris (Chief, Special Needs Housing, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services).
- Increase in funding, and transportation improvement for victims.

VI. Approval of Annual Report – Jessica Leslie

- The annual report has been completed.
- There are minor things that need to be added Jessica needs to put some information about the Board members.

VII. Legislative Subcommittee update: Outreach and Preparation for 2022– Kathryn

- Kathryn sent an overview of the format for writing the testimony and which will help the search in the assembly for testimony.
- Brian Koosed will contact Delegate David Moon's office.
- Kathryn will present her input on December 2nd, 2021.
- Legislation list that we can support this year will be presented.
- Volunteers to help write letters to support the bills.

VIII. Public Affairs/Events Subcommittee updates (15) – Leah Schwartz

- October was a very busy month, and a lot of resources were shared out.
- Followers show that the information they are receiving is important to know.
- Multiple families have come from Afghanistan and who need access to our resources.
- Board Members please share events, legislation updates, and victim resources out to the community.
- National Family Caregivers Month is in the Month of November.

IX. Announcements/Comments/New Business

- The annual report was approved and will be ready soon to be shared out.
- The Preparation of the testimony.
- It will be helpful to have a summarized report about legislation and then to be added all together.

Adjournment 8:30 PM

Next Meeting:

December 2, 2021, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM