



Office of the Texas Governor Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force

New Task Force Member – Welcome Dr. Ralph Riviello!

Dr. Ralph Riviello

Professor and Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine
UT Health San Antonio
Joe R and Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine



Ralph Riviello, MD, MS, FACEP is Professor and Chair of Emergency Medicine at University Health and UT Health San Antonio. Dr. Riviello graduated from Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia and completed an emergency medicine residency at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. Dr. Riviello also earned a Master's Degree in Clinical Forensic Medicine from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Riviello has lectured, written, and researched on the topics of sexual assault, domestic violence, strangulation, and other common emergency department complaints. He has served on several national committees and panels related to these topics as well. He is the author of the textbook, *Clinical Forensic Emergency Medicine: a guide for clinicians*. Dr. Riviello also serves on the Medical Advisory Panel and faculty of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention. While in Philadelphia, Dr. Riviello served on the Philadelphia Sexual Assault Advisory Committee for over 15 years and was instrumental in developing the Philadelphia Sexual Assault Response Center which was a free-standing center, co-located with the Special Victims Unit, providing sexual assault medical forensic examinations to patients 16 years of age and older. The center treated an average of 400 patients per year and employed approximately 15 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners.

SASTF Recommendations Status

Texas 87th Legislative Session – SASTF Policy Recommendations

The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force included **11** policy recommendations in their first Biennial Report to the Texas Legislature. The following bills included Task Force recommendations and have been sent to the Governor for signature.

- [HB 2706](#) (by Rep. Donna Howard; Senate sponsor - Sen. Jane Nelson)
 - The enrolled version of the bill contains the SASTF Health & Safety Code recommendations related to SAFE-Ready facilities.
- [HB 2462](#) (by Rep. Victoria Neave; Senate sponsor - Sen. Angela Paxton)
 - The enrolled version of the bill contains SASTF Code of Criminal Procedure recommendations related to requests for child & adult forensic exams, as well as SASTF recommendations related to evidence tracking and other Government Code provisions. HB 2555, which originally contained the Government Code recommendations, was included in HB 2462 in the final days of session.

Special Thanks to the TAASA and CACTX Policy Teams!



(left to right: Kristen Lenau, Liz Boyce, Katherine Strandberg, Justin Wood, Lisa Harst)

Texas Evidence Collection Advisory Board – Texas Evidence Collection Protocol

The Task Force reviewed the *Texas Evidence Collection Protocol (TECP)* and the *SIRCHIE TX100A Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit*. **58** recommendations for proposed changes to the *TECP* and **56** recommendations for proposed changes to the *SIRCHIE TX100A Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit* were submitted to the Texas Evidence Collection Advisory Board (TXECAB) in October of 2020. TXECAB is currently reviewing these SASTF recommendations.

Office of the Attorney General – SANE Certification

Seven initial recommendations were submitted to the **Office of the Attorney General (OAG) SANE Certification Application Guide – Initial**. Other recommendations with respect to Texas Administrative Code Chapter 62 – Sexual Assault Prevention & Crisis Services – Subchapter A, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Certification and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Training Program Certification will be submitted at a later time. The initial recommendations were adopted and the [OAG SANE Certification Application Guide](#) was updated on August 6, 2020.

Health and Human Services Commission – Information Sheets for Survivor of Sexual Assault

Initial recommendations from the SASTF with respect to the HHSC Information Sheets for Survivors of Sexual Assault were submitted to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). **31** recommendations were submitted for the SAFE-Ready Facilities info sheet, and **10** recommendations were submitted for the Non SAFE-Ready Facilities info sheet. HHSC accepted the Task Force’s recommendations and changes are currently being integrated.

Texas Department of Public Safety – Crime Lab Service Manual Committee

The SASTF reviewed and submitted **13** recommendations for proposed changes to the *Texas DPS Crime Lab Manual* and **9** recommendations to the *Texas DPS Consent for Release of Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence*. All of the recommended changes were approved and an updated [manual](#) was released on April 5, 2021.

Task Force Member Spotlight: Kaye Woodard-Hotz



Kaye Woodard-Hotz

Office of the Attorney General (OAG)
Manager of the Sexual Assault Prevention & Crisis Service (SAPCS) Program/Crime Victim Services Policy & Planning - Crime Victims Services Division

Kaye Woodard-Hotz began working for the Office of the Attorney General in the Child Support Division in 1995 and joined the Crime Victim Services Division in 2002. Her tenure with the Texas Attorney General has been devoted to working on various programs and policy initiatives serving children and crime victims.

In her capacity as manager of the SAPCS program, Kaye oversees various functions related to sexual assault, including:

- Statewide Telehealth Center for Sexual Assault Forensic Medical Examinations
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Certification
- Sexual Assault Training Program Certification
- Texas Evidence Collection Protocol
- Programmatic guidance for OAG grant programs

Kaye is the OAG designated member on the Office of the Governor's Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force, the Tex-TRAC Advisory Board, and the Texas Evidence Collection Protocol Advisory Board. In this role, she leads the OAG's coordinated response to sexual violence. She also served as the Co-Coordinator for the Statewide Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force from January 2009 to January 2019 and was part of the team leading the agency's implementation of human trafficking legislative mandates and initiatives. Kaye attended Texas State University, earning her B.A. in Journalism and a Master's in Public Administration, and a law degree from St. Mary's University School of Law.

City of Austin Sexual Assault Kit Initiative and SASTF Collaboration



We are pleased to announce that the Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) will be collaborating with the [Austin Sexual Assault Kit Initiative \(SAKI\)](#) to support a more coordinated, comprehensive, trauma-informed and survivor-centered response to sexual violence in the Austin community. In 2015, Austin efforts were launched under a grant from the New York District Attorney's office and, in 2017, the City joined the nationwide SAKI movement to track, test, and eliminate the backlog of previously untested and unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs).

The SASTF and Austin SAKI will collaborate on four specific objectives: developing educational outreach campaigns to include medical, legal and supportive services; evaluating the Austin SAKI Victim/Survivor Notification protocols for adults and children; conducting an independent review and assessment of Austin Police Department's system-based advocacy program; and conducting an in-depth review and evaluation of City of Austin procedures and protocols specific to sexual assault.

Through collaborative efforts with significant, survivor-focused initiatives such as Austin SAKI, the SASTF continues to further its mission to: "Establish a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, collaborative and coordinated response to sexual violence experienced by adults and children in Texas."

We look forward to bringing you updates on this exciting collaboration in future editions of our newsletter.

SASTF Prosecutor Working Group

We are excited to announce that the Steering Committee is in the final stages of approving initial membership for a new focused working group comprising prosecutors who have expertise and experience in the prosecution of child and/or adult sexual assault cases. Chaired by Justin Wood from Children's Advocacy Center of Texas (CACTX), this working group will consist of a diverse representation of professionals from across Texas who will provide instrumental insight and perspective as we continue to engage in meaningful work that positively impacts survivors. We are hopeful to have the membership of this group solidified soon so that the inaugural meeting of this working group can be held later this summer.

The Prosecutor Working Group will:

- Hold focused discussions on best practices for the investigation and prosecution of child and adult sexual assault, with particular emphasis on

improving the experiences of survivors who are interacting with prosecutors and others involved in the criminal and civil justice systems;

- Develop recommendations that allow the state to better investigate and prosecute incidents of child and adult sexual assault to ensure that sexual assault offenders are held accountable;
 - Identify areas where trauma-informed principles and approaches can be incorporated into prosecutorial policies, procedures and training;
 - Develop recommendations for strategies to promote system accountability through a higher degree of data sharing and data transparency; and
 - Gain an understanding of training opportunities currently available for prosecutors, specific to adult and child sexual assaults; develop recommendations for additional training based on a needs-assessment.
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Learning Opportunities

2021 Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) Conference – Virtual Power of Connection: Resiliency Through Community

- **Dates:** July 27-30, 2021
- **Costs:** \$300 (non-members) and \$250 (TAASA Members and members of the Military)

[TAASA Conference Website](#)

Crimes Against Children Conference 2021 – Virtual

- **Dates:** August 9-December 17, 2021
- **Cost:** \$400 (Includes access to 100 on-demand sessions)

[CRIMES Conference Website](#)

Funding Opportunities

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) – Expanding Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Services to Victims of Sexual Assault

Grants.gov Deadline: June 15, 2021

Application JustGrants Deadline: June 29, 2021

OVC is seeking applications to establish or expand sexual assault examination programs, including sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) programs and sexual assault forensic examiner (SAFE) programs that focus on improving the provision of sexual assault care using a community-based approach, such as through a campus community, nonprofit, community-based, and/or tribe-affiliated victim services provider.

Pre-Application Webinar

During this pre-application webinar, OVC staff reviewed solicitation requirements and conducted a question and answer session with interested potential applicants.

- [View the webinar presentation](#)
- [View the webinar recording](#)
- [View the webinar transcript](#)

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) - National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative

Grants.gov Deadline: June 22, 2021

Application JustGrants Deadline: July 6, 2021

The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative opportunity supports the Department's priorities of reducing violent crime and supporting law enforcement officers and prosecutors by:

1. Providing jurisdictions (including rural and tribal) with resources to address sexual assault kits in their custody that have not been submitted to a forensic laboratory for testing by Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)-eligible DNA methodologies.
2. Improving investigation and prosecution in connection with evidence and cases resulting from the testing process.
3. Providing sites with resources to collect DNA samples from qualifying individuals who should have a sample in CODIS (based on the type and time of the offense in relation to applicable state law), but from whom a sample has never been collected or submitted to a laboratory for testing.

In addition to unsubmitted SAKs, SAKI addresses partially tested SAKs, as defined in the solicitation, and untested evidence associated with sexually motivated homicides.

Important Information about OJP Application Deadlines:

Beginning in FY 2021, Office of Justice Programs (OJP) funding applicants will have two deadlines to meet when submitting their applications.

The first deadline will be to submit the SF-424 and SF-LLL in Grants.gov. The second deadline covers the submission of the full application, including attachments, in the new Justice Grants System (JustGrants). Both deadlines can be found on the OJP and respective program office websites, as well as the first page of the solicitation. The dates are further explained in the "Submission Information" section of the solicitation. Applicants are required to meet both deadlines.