

**MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VIICTIIM SERVICES MEETIING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

Hosted by: Montgomery County Police Department

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Ellen Alexander, Anne Bean, Laurie Rajala for Tammy Brown, Jessica Dickerson, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, David Wolinski for Rhea Harris, Scott Keller, Donnica Fife-Stallworth for Molly Knipe, Patricia Marshall, Margery Patten, Scott Beard for Cindy Pease, Debra Tall, Deborah Unitus and Virginia Wolf.

STAFF: Richard Hoffman, Anne Litecky and Monique Mitchell.

GUESTS: Russell Butler, Nadja Cabello, Michaele Cohen, Karen Darby, Morton Davis, Laine Duker, A. Thomas Grazio, Annabelle Gerendusy, Jorgelina Hernandez, Lisae Jordan, Dan Lane, Stefan LoBuglio, Barbara Meiklejohn, Tina Michaels, Linda Ridall, Chris Robinson, Sheriff Darren Popkin, Sgt. Jordan Satinsky, William Solled and Judy Whiton.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:43 a.m.

MINUTES:

Motion: Move to accept Minutes for September

Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved

❖ **COMPLIANCE:**

Richard Hoffmann is working with Debra Tall on The Victim Rights Compliance Initiative and MDEC (Maryland Electronic Courts) system to ensure Chapter 205 (2014)(Victim Electronic Notification) is implemented into the system as it is developed and implemented in Anne Arundel County for the MDEC pilot project

The State Court Administrator responded to the draft juvenile protocol that was approved at the September Board meeting. The State Court Administrator agreed, with two minor changes, to the proposed protocol and will be implementing it in the Anne Arundel County MDEC pilot

The draft criminal protocol will be sent to the State Court Administrator upon approval from the Board. The new protocol will allow victims to register for electronic notification earlier

- **Motion:** To accept the proposed criminal protocol for electronic registration for victim notification through the MDEC electronic courts system, drafted pursuant to Ch.205, Md. Laws of 2014, presented to the Board, along with technical revisions to the juvenile protocol approved at the September Board meeting.
- **Vote:** Seconded and approved, the criminal protocol and revised juvenile protocol were accepted

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

❖ **Chief of Police, Chief J. Thomas Manger**

- The Chief is grateful to the State Board for coming to Montgomery County and the work the Board is doing, and mentioned how victim rights have been revolutionized because of the work of the Board
- The work the Board does helping people regain their sense of safety is amazing
- Allowing Montgomery County the opportunity to be heard, to discuss what's working, what's not working and what could be better- is important and greatly appreciated

❖ **Special Investigation Unit, Jordan Satinsky**

- The Family Justice Center handles all domestic violence related crimes. The Family Justice Center houses domestic violence units from the police department and State's Attorney's office and victims advocates
- The Family Justice Center also houses all the sex crimes and elder vulnerable adult abuse crimes
- The collaboration with the Family Justice Center and APP (Abused Person Program) has helped to identify more cases of elder vulnerable adult abuse. In 2008, 8 cases were handled, in 2013- 114 cases. There have been over 150 cases investigated this year
- The Attorney General has recognized Montgomery County for spearheading the specialization of elder vulnerable adult abuse and crimes against seniors. There are currently, two (2) Assistant State's Attorneys dedicated specifically to cases of elder abuse (physically, sexually, neglect and financially (60% of the cases))
- This is extremely challenging because many victims can't hear or speak; the majority and don't realize they are victims
- Unfortunately, we are lacking resources, staffing and victims' advocates who are trained to work with elder vulnerable adult population. There is no formal education relating to the needs of this victim population. There seems to be a nationwide problem with the lack of training

❖ **Keeping Seniors Safe, Morton Davis**

- Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS) goes to churches, mosques, synagogues or neighborhoods to teach elders, mainly women how to conduct themselves safely when shopping.
- Works with the Fraud Department and FENRA to teach about scams perpetrated through the computer, telephone and at the door
- The new Attorney General has assigned an attorney to the KSS program at the Montgomery County Police Department
- Currently working with banks in retirement communities to establish procedures to contact the senior's family, when there is a change in activity on a senior's account, of the possibility of fraud.

- Ellen mentioned she has been working with KSS on placing fraud alerts on the Montgomery County Website or grocery stores to help seniors be more aware of scams.
- ❖ **Montgomery County Police Department, Victim Services, Linda Ridall**
 - Helps victim because advocates are not law enforcement and serve more as a liaison and support to the department and the victims
 - Our focus is to help the victim, especially immigrants, emotionally and financially, by making a personal connection, educate and help through the path of services available to them: court support, CICB, health insurance, APP (abused persons program)
 - Despite a reduction in staff, we are able to maintain support for all victim populations and added property crime and burglary units
 - Victim Services is able to make referrals for services for victims that are affected by property crimes, such as therapy for children who may have been home alone when the crime was taking place
 - It was suggested that advocates resume meeting together to network and stay updated on services throughout the county. This will also help advocates and officers stay updated on what's going on in the field, new legislature.
 - Training is needed for advocates on victim populations outside of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- ❖ **Clerk of the Court, Barbara Meikeljohn**
 - Just began working as Clerk of the Court
 - Currently, the manager for the juvenile system
- ❖ **Montgomery County Sheriff, Sheriff Darren Popkin**
 - Heads the Family Justice Center
 - Six (6) years ago the county Sheriffs were handling some really serious domestic violence cases, children being killed, etc. This impacted change and the Family Justice Center was created
 - The police department, State's Attorney and County Executive wanted to bring all the services together in one place as opposed to victims going throughout the county for services-especially individuals who are new to the domestic violence system
 - Forty (40) different service areas throughout the county are now in one location. This includes Catholic Charities, House of Ruth, Montgomery County Police, State's Attorneys, etc.
 - The Family Justice Center assists about twenty (20) victims a day and have seen over 6000 victims since inception in 2008
 - Prior to the Family Justice Center, 75% of female homicide victims were killed by a domestic partner.
 - Shelters are onsite at the Family Justice Center and are direct partners, as well as APP, and Pretrial services
 - Pretrial services monitors about 175 domestic violence offenders
 - The Family Justice Center is constantly educating the community and teens about domestic violence and unhealthy relationships

- Family Justice Center offers resume assistance, job readiness training and scholarships for continued education for victims



❖ **Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Stefan LoBugilo**

- The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is firmly committed to the safety of public citizens and partners with the Police Department, Family Justice Center, APP and the Sheriff's office to prepare offenders for post released, as well as the community to receive these individuals
- The department is comprises three (3) divisions; Pre-trial Division, Jails/Detention and Pre-release Program
- Crime Victim Notification Forms are processed right away; all files are marked in red if they have a Crime Victim Notification Form. Approximately, 10% of cases request notification
- Currently there are 850 individuals in detention and 2000 in pre-trial
- The Department is connected with VINE and victims are encouraged to use VINE
- Montgomery County's Pre-Release is the only program to offer work release; this prepares offenders prior to release, with employment, savings, housing and rebuilding family relationships.
- In partnership with Parole and Probation and the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, inmates on work release are now required to pay restitution before being released.
- Upon entry in the pre-release program offenders are set up on restitution to ensure 100% restitution is collected. Right now we are at 80%.
- Victim services are sometimes bought in to assist inmates (residents) who have been victimized to ensure their rights are upheld

❖ **Pre-Trial, Tina Michaels**

- Pre-Trial is currently supervising 700 offenders
- Last month, Pre-Trial supervised 153 domestic violence and 53 sexual assault cases
- Two members of the staff are dedicated to domestic violence and sexual assault cases
- Domestic violence case workers attend weekly alert meetings about serious cases throughout the community. This gives insight into the cases and ensures the Department monitors offenders in the community effectively
- Crime Victim Notification letters are sent out to domestic violence victims to give tips and direct contact information
- Offenders can be placed on GPS technology to monitor if offenders are entering or exiting exclusion zones based on peace orders
- Staff is trained on GPS exclusion zone alerts so officers are able to act on any situations where offenders have violated the orders. Since August, there have been no incidents
- Case managers for sexual assault conduct home visits of offenders to identify just see if there is anything of concern for the school and the children in the area. Ensures that defendants are in compliance with all pre-trial conditions.

- ❖ **Department of Juvenile Services, Jessica Dickerson**
 - Montgomery County and PG County are in the Metro region, DJS supervises the largest number of youth under supervision. Montgomery County has about 630 youth currently being supervised
 - Through the restorative justice program, youth are referred to victim awareness programs.
 - Victim rights are reached out at intake level, victim impact statements, community services and notifications are given to victims from DJS
 - From January 2014 to date about \$74,500 has been collected in restitution
 - Sex trafficking screening is done on all offenders who may also be victims
 - DJS has to adhere to the Prisoner Rape Elimination Act
- ❖ **Department of Parole and Probation, Dave Wolinski**
 - DPP is currently working on Prisoner Rape Elimination Act passed in 2003. For the past 10 years, executives and attorneys have been developing regulations on how facilities should operate and respond to sexual assault cases by staff or inmates.
 - In the next few months, 6 facilities will be audited for compliance under the act
- ❖ **Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program, Abused Person Program, Nadja Cabello**
 - APP and VASAP are celebrating 40 years of existence
 - Over 1200 victims were seen in FY14
 - Victims come for group and individual counseling, psychiatrist is onsite once a week
 - The shelter is contracted to HHS' Family Services Division. It is a 54 bed facility and is always full. Sometimes victims are placed in hotels, due to overcrowding at the shelter.
 - A 22 week State certified program for offenders has been established in partnership with Pre-Release, the courts, and judges. Over 500 males have been assigned for assessments to determine their lethality.
 - The assessment has 280 lethality protocols, which assist police when responding to domestic violence calls that escalate
 - 85% of the calls are referred to counseling and education.
 - State agencies, particularly adult protective services workers and child protective services, are being trained on administering the lethality assessment protocols.
 - There is a growing trend in female offenders. They are victims who are now victimizing. A 22 week model program is in place for female offenders.
 - VASAP assault program sees all other victims from children to elderly
 - This program sees ALL violent crime victims, homicide assault, burglary-
 - Groups are for victims
 - There is a growing population of sexual assault victims who have been seriously physically assaulted
 - All programs offer court assistance and referrals to legal assistance and CICB claim processing

- Montgomery County has a similar program to CICB that is used initially; whatever can't be taken care of locally are referred to MD CICB
- APP and VASAP have a lot of volunteers, 12,000 volunteer hours are donated annually to cover both programs 24 hours a day
- Collaboration and coordination with stakeholders is imperative to the success of the programs
- VASAP has developed support groups with NAMI for elderly victims who are being victimized by their children who are substance abusers or mentally ill
- VASAP is assisting with the Prisoner Rape Elimination Act
- There currently is no shelter for human trafficking victims.
- Unaccompanied minors coming from other countries unaccompanied by a parent or guardian are a challenge. They have been victims, and many have seen a lot of trauma, murder of family members, sexual assault, etc. (crossing the border alone)
- Shelter for domestic violence victims is a challenge; we have no where to put victims who want to stay in the county but are unable to afford to, due to lack of skills
- Domestic violence victims need a safe place to take children when visiting offenders to eliminate further incidents of abuse

❖ **Tree House Assessment Center – Thomas Grazio**

- Child Advocacy centers exist in every county in the state. Children go to the CAC to talk about a very traumatic experience
- 50% cases are child sexual abuse. 100% are children and non-offending parents
- Tree House provides full medical services, forensic interview and behavioral services focused on trauma recovery
- Staff victim advocates help with the court assistance

❖ **Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board, Judith Whiton**

- Local board, created by mandate in 1985 to support the needs of victims in the county
- The Board stays abreast of what needs of victims are in the county
- The Board advocates for agencies and organizations in the county for funding
- Domestic Violence housing is a priority; the Board has worked with county leaders to get more housing for domestic violence victims
 - The Board is currently advocating for supervised visitation center for domestic violence victims
- The Board is asking the State to consider funding at a state level to protect kids who are hearing and seeing domestic violence incidents
- Victim friendly courts:
 - Victim advocates to file orders with the court
 - Why aren't victims coming to court? Do they need court assistance?
 - Stagger arrival and leaving of offenders and victims

❖ **Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board, Judith Whiton (continued)**

- Emergency family maintenance to help victims become self sufficient, victims should request for emergency family maintenance.
 - Offenders need counseling.
 - SANE program is working well. Shady Grove Hospital oversees Montgomery County's SANE program. They have 12 nurses. They are working with domestic violence victims to do exams with no visible injuries. This protocol has resulted in upgraded charges from misdemeanors to felonies and attempted murder.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:26 p.m.