

Subject: DHS- Response to COSW Testimony

**FY 2018 Proposed Budget
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

4/12/2017

The following information is provided in response to a request made by Ms. Katie Cristol at the work session on 3/24/2017, regarding the testimony provided by Caroline Romano, Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, concerning access to rape kits in Arlington and the increase in rapes/sexual assaults between FY 2015 and FY 2016.

Full Question: Please respond to the Commission on the Status of Women's concerns about the lack of access to rape kits in Arlington and the increase in rapes/sexual assaults from FY 2015 to FY 2016. What are DHS and Police doing to address these issues?

To address domestic and sexual violence, Arlington County utilizes a coordinated community response organized through Project PEACE. This community- wide response includes partners from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Arlington County Police Department (ACPD), the Sheriff's Department, the Commonwealth Attorney's Office (CAO), the Magistrate's Office, Doorways for Women and Families, Legal Services of Northern VA, and many other agencies and organizations. The overarching goals of Arlington's response is to ensure that: 1) victims have access to the services they need to support justice and healing; 2) batterer's and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence are held accountable for their actions; and 3) domestic and sexual violence outreach, awareness and prevention efforts are present and sustained in the schools and community. Highlights of Arlington's Project PEACE relevant accomplishments in the past year are:

- Established a centralized 24/7 Hotline for access to all victim services.
- Launched the REVIVE Counseling center for victims of domestic and sexual violence.
- Expanded the scope of Project PEACE to include services for youth victims of dating and sexual violence.
- Enhanced access and accompaniment 24/7 to Sexual Assault Nurse Examinations (SANE exams); including a standing first responders' sub-committee to evaluate services and solve problems case by case.
- Conducted a county-wide public awareness and education campaigns, reaching over 3,000 students and parents.
- Led funding support efforts for expansion of SANE exam access in the Northern Virginia region.
- Implemented Bar Bystander Training program with DHS, Arlington Police Department, Arlington Commonwealth's Attorney (CAO) Victim Witness Program and the Clarendon restaurant owners/managers.

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In addition to Project PEACE, Arlington's CAO convenes regular Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) meetings. This team's work focuses on resources, legislation, policies, and procedures of partner agencies to address emerging sexual violence trends. As a direct result of Project PEACE and SART, every victim in Arlington who has wanted advocate support for PERK or SANE exams has received it in the past calendar year. Also, the Arlington Police Special Victims Unit has instituted trauma informed practices in conducting interviews with victims. Finally, Arlington's efforts are complementary to national campaigns and outreach on social media sending consistent messages that encourage reporting sexual assault to law enforcement.

Changes in ACPD records management combined with significant community efforts to encourage reporting may account for increases in incidents reported to Police. Sexual assault is a highly underreported crime. The increase in rapes and attempted rapes from 2015 to 2016 may be partially due to higher reporting rates which coincide with increased community outreach efforts such as Doorways taking on a more prominent role including managing the Violence Intervention Program (now called Revive) and the newly established domestic and sexual violence hotline. Lt. Reiten of ACPD/SVU confirmed that there were 24 reported rapes or attempted rapes in calendar year 2015 compared to 42 reported in calendar year 2016. However, he noted that some cases were reported in 2016 for incidents that occurred in prior years and this may be the result of enhanced outreach efforts. The increase could also be attributed to a change in how sexual assaults are reported. In the second half of 2016, the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) transitioned to a new Records Management System that has changed the way crimes are reported to the State. In the past, crimes were reported under the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) system. Now, crimes are reported under the Incident-Based Reporting System which enables Police to classify a wider range of report incidents as rape or attempted rape.

Arlington victims of sexual assault who choose to have Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (PERKs) completed receive those services at INOVA Forensic Assessment and Consultation Team (FACT) Department in Fairfax, VA. Mary Hale, Director of Inova FACT Department, reports that there were 29 completed rape exams for 2016. When necessary, Arlington Police send their evidence technicians to INOVA Fairfax to collect evidence or take pictures. In the past year, significant strides have been made to enhance the response at INOVA and reduce wait times or diversions to other hospitals. With support from the Arlington County Board, Project PEACE and elected officials from neighboring jurisdictions, the INOVA FACT Department received a three-year grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services to support four full-time, sexual assault nurse examiners for PERKs and other critical forensic services. INOVA FACT Department Director Mary Hale, indicated at the most recent Sexual Assault Response Team meeting that they have completed the expansion. INOVA FACT has not received any complaints from victims about traveling to Fairfax County to receive PERK services.