



**Testimony on S.95  
Senate Health and Welfare  
March 15, 2017**

**Auburn Watersong  
Policy Director**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about S.95 related to the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. Recent national news has highlighted the need for improved systems to process and manage the sexual assault forensic exam kits – also known as “Rape Kits”. Although the Vermont Forensic Lab does not have kits sitting untested for longer than 6 months (as many other states have), Vermont does have a challenge when it comes to the tracking and documentation of these kits. You will hear more about this from the SANE Program Coordinator, Sarah Robinson.

In recent years in Vermont, the number of certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners has grown. The SANE Program is housed at the Vermont Network. We have learned that changes are needed in order ensure that the SANE program continues to grow, and we need to do a better job in helping victims of sexual assault get the care and attention they need and deserve.

S.95 will ensure that the SANE program has a stable funding source, the certification process is more relevant and nimble, the provision of SANE care is more accessible to victims, and challenges regarding the tracking, documentation, and delivery of kits are adequately assessed and remedied.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the committee pass S.95, including the revisions as proposed below.

**SUMMARY OF S.95**

S. 95 revises the purpose and procedures of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Board

- The purpose of the SANE board was to regulate sexual assault nurse examiners
  - The new purpose is to advise the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program
- The composition of the board includes a physician member
  - We propose to change “physician” to “health care provider” and adds the Commissioner of Health or designee.
- A section was added related to what the SANE Board shall advise the SANE Program:
  - statewide program priorities;
  - training and educational requirements;
  - a standardized sexual assault protocol and kit to be used by all physicians and hospitals in this State when providing forensic examinations of victims of alleged sexual offenses; and
  - statewide policy development related to sexual assault nurse examiner program.



- Funding for the SANE Program Clinical Coordinator position is either through the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services or through other identified state funding options .
- The responsibilities of the Clinical Coordinator is expanded to include coordinating and managing a system for ensuring best practices within the SANE program as they apply to the certification of sexual assault nurse examiners.

S.95 requires all acute care hospitals to provide patients with care from a paid employee who is also a certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner or has access to a shared regional staffing pool that includes certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners.

S.95 requires appropriate emergency department personnel at all hospitals to receive, at a minimum, annual training by the SANE Program regarding standards for care of sexual assault patients.

S.95 creates the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Study Committee for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive examination of issues related to sexual assault evidence kits including tracking, documentation, transportation and delivery. Membership includes:

- one current member of the House of Representatives
- one current member of the Senate;
- the Director of the Vermont Forensic Lab or designee;
- the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services or designee;
- the Commissioner of Health or designee;
- a representative of Vermont Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) program; and
- a law enforcement professional appointed by Commissioner of Public Safety

### **PROPOSED REVISIONS:**

#### **Page 3**

- (10) Change “health care professional” to “health care provider”.
- (10) Change Appointed by “Vermont Medical Society” to appointed by “the provider’s supervising entity”.

#### **Page 4**

- Section 1
  - (4) Change to “statewide policy development related to sexual assault nurse examiner programs.”
- Section 2
  - Strike lines 7-9 and replace with the following: A clinical coordinator position shall be funded by either the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services or through other identified state funding options, for the purpose of staffing.....



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- Section 4 – strike (a)-(d) and replace with:

(a) Hospitals with an emergency department must have at least one certified sexual assault nurse examiner on staff or access to a shared regional staffing pool that includes certified sexual assault nurse examiners. Certified sexual assault nurse examiners shall be compensated for performing medical forensic examinations.

(b) The State shall require appropriate emergency department personnel to receive at a minimum annual training by the SANE Program regarding standards for care of sexual assault patients. Personnel who are certified sexual assault nurse examiners shall not be subject to this subsection.

(c) The SANE Program shall report to the legislature on or before July 1 2018, and annually thereafter to the SANE Board, on hospital training compliance pursuant to this section.

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Sec. 5

Add the following

(8) The Executive Director of a Sexual Investigation Unit or her/his designee or the Executive Director of a Child Advocacy Center or her/his designee.

Thank you.