

Sunset Advisory Commission
Board and Commission Review of SANE Advisory Board

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.
 - The SANE Advisory Board meets five times per year (every other month minus one meeting). In 2019 the Board met on February 13th, April 10th, June 26th, September 11th and November 13th. In 2020, the Board met on January 8th, March 4th, September 9th and November 18th. The May 2020 meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19. The agendas for the meetings and contact information for additional meeting information can be found on the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program website at www.vermontsane.org.
2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.
 - No Board members receive per diem for their service on the Board. Please see attached Board list for current members and appointing authority.
3. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.
 - The SANE Board's statutory purpose is to advise the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program on the following topics: (1) statewide program priorities, (2) training and educational requirements, (3) a standardized sexual assault protocol and kits to be used by all physicians and hospitals in this State when providing forensic examinations of victims of alleged sexual offenses, and (4) statewide policy development related to sexual assault nurse examiner programs.
4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?
 - The SANE Board is a critical component of Vermont's medical response to victims of sexual violence. In its role, the Board helps advise the statewide coordination

of the program, which relies on a network of hospitals and other institutions throughout the state. In addition, the educational requirements for credentialing the cadre of highly-trained nurses who provide medical care to victims of sexual assault across Vermont are established by the Board. This important function creates a separation of duties which allows the program staff to complete the training and credentialing of nurses, to the educational specifications set forth by the Board. In addition, successful forensic evidence collection relies on statewide standards of care so that evidence collected at any medical site can be used in judicial proceedings across the state. Finally, forensic medical care relies on interdisciplinary collaboration between medical providers, law enforcement, victims advocates and child protection. The Board maintains a key role in facilitating this collaboration statewide.

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

- The Board is fulfilling their purpose. Due to the work and engagement of the Board, the SANE staff work to achieve and report progress toward annual goals. Vermont has a standardized evidence collection kit which is used in every hospital in the state and in numerous legal proceedings each year. Finally, the workforce of highly-trained forensic nurses in Vermont is stable and the educational requirements set forth by the board ensure that their expertise can be used in legal proceedings when it is needed.

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

- Most states in the U.S. staff a forensic nursing program within state government and a state agency. For example, the Massachusetts program is located in the Vermont Department of Health, the Maine program is located within the Attorney General's office and the Connecticut program is located within the Department for Public Safety. Vermont is unique, but not alone, in locating this program within the domestic and sexual violence coalition which is a non-profit organization. Because of this arrangement, the Board serves an important role in ensuring that Vermont's forensic nursing program is connected to public services such as law enforcement and child protection. While it is possible that this program would have greater efficacy if resourced within a state agency, it would be unlikely to be as efficient and would certainly be more costly.

7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission's functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?

- No, there is no overlap or duplication.

8. Does the board or commission's enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?

- Yes. The statutory language was recently updated and reflects the purpose and activities of the Board.

9. Provide a list of the board and commission's last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

- The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program is primarily funded through a \$150,000 allocation of federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds that are granted to the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence by the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services. There are two other small federal grants that supplement these funds. Using these federal funds, the Vermont Network provides in-kind staffing of the SANE Advisory Board. The SANE Advisory Board does not have a budget and does not expend any funds.

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

- No, the Board is not required by law to prepare any report or studies.

11. How would you measure the performance of the board or commission?

- The Board engages in an annual process to set priorities for the program in the coming year. At the conclusion of each calendar year, the Board discusses what has been achieved before creating new priorities. In addition, the Board monitors the number of credentialed forensic nurses in Vermont through regular program updates.