

May 22, 2024

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RE: SANE Sexual Assault Medical Exam in the Emergency Department

This letter will explain our process for an adult sexual assault exam performed in the Emergency Department at St. James.

St. James is continually developing the nursing staff in adult SANE training in order to have registered nurses skilled in this area and available 24 hours a day. They not only examine a victim as a health professional, but they approach their work with special sensitivity and knowledge about sexual assault/abuse. The nurse can assess, document, and collect evidence for the legal aspect of their cases. Their work is vital to adequately serving patients of sexual assault and their job goes beyond a typical medical examination.

A SANE exam usually begins with an interview and prepares the victim for the exam. The exam includes STD evaluation and preventative care, HIV testing, pregnancy risk and prevention, and counseling options. Documenting and proper collection of evidence is important for any legal case that transpires. The RN will also provide referrals to advocacy groups and will evaluate the emotional state to determine if further evaluation and/or treatment is needed. In addition to the SANE exam, all patients not having a medical evaluation before coming to the emergency department will receive one from the medical provider on staff.

There are many complex issues involved with this nursing field, such as confidentiality, consent, mandated reporting, and uncooperative victims. However, our nursing and medical staff work closely and collaboratively with local law enforcement and EMS providers.

Thank you for all you do for our Butte community and for your continued support of St. James. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

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