

SART Listserv

October 2006

Buccal Swabs

States are listed as a point of reference and do not necessarily represent a statewide perspective

Issue: Are buccal swabs preferred over blood samples for DNA?

General Comments

- Check with your State Crime Lab and encourage them to change to buccal swabs
- Buccal swabs are much less traumatizing for patients and work well for suspect exams
- Buccal swabs are state-of-the-art and easily fit into State Kits.
- Patients don't have to worry about needle sticks.....they are a great improvement over drawing blood.

Florida

- In Pinellas County Florida we use buccal swabs;
- Florida Dept of Law Enforcements wants us to use buccal swabs;
- To date we have not had any challenges with using them.

New York

- New York changed to buccal swabs a few years ago; they work great, less intrusive than blood sampling. We no longer use blood samples;
- No legal challenges;
- Labs are happy to handle buccal swabs rather than blood;
- Not if there was a price differential in our kits when we switched from blood tubes to buccal swabs; if there was, it was minimal;
- Buccal swabs enable kit storage without refrigeration.

Louisiana

- We are starting up a program in Lafayette, Louisiana and should be up and running 24/7 by Jan 1.
- I have been educated to collect buccal swabs for DNA and to treat prophylactically for STIs;
- However, the SANEs locally have encouraged me to collect blood for baseline HIV status.

Oklahoma

- In Oklahoma City we use buccal swabs for victim DNA;
- Saliva is a much better source of DNA, and it is less invasive;
- The blood sample is still in our kits. We only use it for DNA if the victim reports oral sodomy/ejaculation. Then, we collect buccal swabs and blood.