

Standardized Kits

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

Issue: Standardized medical forensic exam kits.

Background: Is there a downside to standardizing forensic exams kits statewide?

Florida

- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has provided standardized sexual assault exam kits (SAEKs) at no charge for years.
- They were initially prepared and standardized in each separate region until a few years ago, when they were standardized statewide.
- We now purchase the kits from an outside vendor, then ship to hospitals and law enforcement agencies in each region.
- As a member of the forensic community in Florida, I have screened hundreds of kits. Standardized kits include all of the samples we need, without including items no longer necessary, such as hairs.
- Also, the standardized forms have the exact information we need, so it saves time from trying to contact investigators (who often have schedules outside of lab hours) for details on the case.
- Our kits include two envelopes of "other" swabs for collection of additional samples, and a paper bag for the underwear.
- Our Toxicology section provides separate kits for blood and urine specimen collection in drug/alcohol-facilitated assaults.
- If more swabs are needed than are provided in the kit, the hospital can provide additional swabs or even pull from another SAEK.

Ohio

- As far as I am aware of I do not know of any complaints or issues with standardized kits.
- If there is something out of the norm that needs to be included in the kits, we just include it - extra swabs, clothing bags etc.
- Our crime lab is good about getting back to us if they have a question about the kits. I like the standardization of the kits, personally.

Rhode Island

- I don't think there's a downside to standardizing kits - much as we standardize SANE didactic training - so that states have best practices in evidence collection.
- In RI, we have a committee of medical professionals, law enforcement officers, advocates, forensic biologists, and prosecuting attorneys that review the kits periodically to ensure the procedures, written directions and paperwork provides the best evidence collection
- Certainly, a national model kit that reflects scientific advancements and forensic examination could help.