

SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Response Training for Physicians

SUBMITTED BY: ACOFP Resident Council

REFERRED TO: 2025 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP)
Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 19

1 WHEREAS, traumatic events, including sexual abuse, are associated with long-term physical and
2 psychological effects. The physical impact of trauma can be extensive and may involve
3 somatization; changes in biology such as altered limbic system functioning, changes in the
4 activity of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, and neurotransmitter-related
5 dysregulation; hyperarousal and sleep disturbances; as well as altered cognition¹; and
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7 WHEREAS, traumatic events may influence patients' health care experiences and engagement in
8 preventative care²; and
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10 WHEREAS, a sexual assault occurs every 73 seconds and a sexual assault on a pediatric victim occurs
11 every 9 minutes within the United States, and, the lifetime rates of sexual assaults are between
12 17 - 18% for women & 3 % for men, and the evidence for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
13 (SANE) programs suggests improved outcomes in patient psychological recovery, treatment,
14 evidence collection and prosecution of cases³; and
15

16 WHEREAS, there are 1,732 SANE certified nurses in the United States, and of those, 502 are registered
17 to work with children, and according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 268,297
18 primary care physicians in the United States, which are in a prime position to provide a range of
19 support for sexual assault victims⁴; and
20

21 WHEREAS, current forensic examinations are driven by trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
22 (SANE) who are trained through the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN); and
23

24 WHEREAS, SANE certification is available to nurses and advanced practice nurses; however, there is
25 no equivalent certification for physicians or physician assistants³; now, therefore be it
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27 RESOLVED, that the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) explores pathways
28 for physicians to become educated in the collection of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases
29 and to gain competence in the examination of sexual assault survivors.
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31 **FINAL ACTION: AMENDED and APPROVED as of April 2, 2025**

References:

1. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Understanding the impact of trauma. National Library of Medicine. Published 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>

2. Raja S, Hasnain M, Hoersch M, Gove-Yin S, Rajagopalan C. Trauma Informed Care in Medicine. *Family & Community Health*. 2015;38(3):216-226.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1097/fch.0000000000000071>
3. U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. *A National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations Adults/Adolescents*;;
2024. <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/media/1367191/dl?inline>
4. HRSA Health Workforce. State of the Primary Care Workforce, 2023. Published November 2023. <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/state-of-primary-care-workforce-2023.pdf>