

**National Coordination Committee on the American Indian/Alaska Native  
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team Initiative**

**Federal Advisory Committee Meeting**

**October 13, 2015**



**National Coordination Committee on the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Sexual  
Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team  
(SANE-SART) Initiative**

**Federal Advisory Committee Meeting (via Web conference)**

**October 13, 2015**

**Background**

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)—in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Indian Health Service (IHS), other federal partners, tribal governments, and organizations, including training and technical assistance (TTA) providers—established the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative (Initiative) in 2010. The overall goal of the Initiative is to enhance AI/AN communities' capacity to provide high quality, multidisciplinary services and support for adult and child victims of sexual violence. In addition to funding three demonstration sites and a tribal TTA provider, OVC and its federal partners developed a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC), named the National Coordination Committee on the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative (Committee), to ensure that this Initiative is responsive to victims and survivors, families, and individuals in tribal communities. The goal of the Committee is to develop recommendations for OVC and its federal partners on how to increase the commitment of all key stakeholders to end sexual violence in AI/AN communities through collaboration.

The Committee convened its eighth meeting on October 13, 2015, with the goal of providing an update on the status of the Recommendation Memo submitted to the Attorney General, and to thank the Committee members for their service. Sarah Deer, Committee Chair, opened the meeting. The meeting took place at 4:00 p.m. eastern time. A total of 12 individuals participated, including 8 Committee members and 2 federal observers. Seven Committee members were absent.

**Federal Advisory Committee Members Present\***

Hallie Bongar-White

Sarah Collins

Kim Day

Sarah Deer, Committee Chair

Theresa Friend (Designee of Dr. Susan Karol)

Bea Hanson

Linda Logan

Geri Wisner

\*FAC members Judge Peggy Bird, Darren Cruzan, Dr. Susan Karol, Donna Keeler, Juana Majel-Dixon, Shirley Moses, and Kathryn Turman were not present for this meeting.

**Federal Observers**

Allison Turkel, Deputy Director, DOJ, OVC

Shannon May, Committee Designated Federal Official, FBI, Office for Victim Assistance

### **Additional Observers**

Lisa Lampman, Meeting Facilitator

Jennifer Shewmake, OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center

### **Traditional Opening**

Committee member Geri Wisner offered a traditional opening.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Sarah Deer, Committee Chair, thanked Geri Wisner and welcomed Committee members to the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review the Committee's work to date and to provide an update on the status of the memo to the Attorney General based on the Committee's Recommendations Report. Sarah thanked the Committee members for their service on the Committee and introduced Allison Turkel, Deputy Director, OVC.

On behalf of Joye Frost, Director of OVC, Allison thanked the Committee members for their dedication and service.

### **Roll Call**

Shannon May conducted a roll call of Committee members.

### **Overview of Committee's Work**

Sarah Deer provided an overview of the Committee's work to date.

Sarah briefly detailed the Committee's efforts since its inception:

- In 2010, OVC established its American Indian/Alaska Native Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team Initiative to address the comprehensive needs of tribal victims of sexual violence, with the ultimate goal of institutionalizing sustainable and evidence-based practices that meet the needs of tribal communities.
- In 2011, OVC chartered the National Coordination Committee on the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative as a Federal Advisory Committee, OVC asked individuals to serve on the Committee in 2012, and in December 2012, members received a formal letter of invitation from Attorney General Eric Holder.
- Also as part of the Initiative, OVC convened three Federal Working Groups: Alaska Native Issues, Child Sexual Abuse, and First Responders. The three Federal Working Groups provided critical data that assisted in the development of the series of issue papers that informed the initial work of the Committee.

- The Committee's first meeting took place December 4–5, 2012, in conjunction with the 13<sup>th</sup> National Indian Nations Conference. During the 2-day meeting, the Committee developed and prioritized 44 draft recommendations.
- In February 2013, three subcommittees categorized, combined, and refined the recommendations.
- In April 2013, the Committee discussed and further revised the subcommittees' resulting 18 draft recommendations.
- During the summer and fall of 2013, Sarah Deer, in coordination with input from five Committee members, drafted a contextual White Paper, which provided an overview of the Committee's proposed recommendations.
- In 2013, OVC re-chartered the National Coordination Committee and revised the charter to allow the Committee's recommendations to be submitted directly to the U.S. Attorney General for review and approval.
- On November 19, 2013, the Committee convened to discuss the initial draft of the Recommendations Report.
- From December 2013–January 2014, the Initiative staff, in collaboration with Committee members, conducted additional background research, incorporated references to relevant legislation, and identified possible quotations to include in the draft Recommendations Report.
- On February 4–5, 2014, four Committee members met with Initiative staff in Washington, D.C., to revise the Recommendations Report further.
- From February–April 2014, Committee members provided feedback on the initial draft of the Recommendations Report in preparation for a briefing with Associate Attorney General Tony West.
- In May 2014, Joye Frost, Shannon May, Bea Hanson, and Office of Justice Programs Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason briefed Mr. West on the draft report.
- Mr. West's comments on the initial draft of the Recommendations Report were addressed, and the final Recommendations Report was submitted to Attorney General Holder in June 2014 for review and approval.
- On November 14, 2014, Committee members (Chair Sarah Deer, Judge Bird, Geri Wisner, Sarah Collins, and Bea Hanson, and DFO Shannon May) briefed Attorney General Holder on the Recommendations Report.
- Mr. Holder stated that he believed the Committee's recommendations were actionable and concrete and expressed his thanks to the Committee for its work. He explained that he considered improving the way federal agencies work with tribal nations to be his

“legacy work” and that he was committed to advancing these issues until his departure as Attorney General.

### **Update on the Status of the Recommendations Report and Memo**

Shannon May provided the following update:

- At the November 14, 2014, briefing, Mr. Holder requested that OVC develop a list of next steps based on the Committee’s recommendations, which he and his staff could implement in the short term.
- The Initiative staff, in collaboration with Committee members, drafted a memo with action steps that: (1) if implemented, would have a dramatic impact on federal agencies’ response to sexual violence in tribal nations, and (2) were able to be implemented within a short timeframe.
- The memo addressed the following issues:
  - Asking that the Attorney General issue a directive requiring U.S. Attorneys’ Offices (USAO) with Indian Country jurisdiction to convene a meeting with the highest-ranking federal officials in their Districts from the FBI, BIA, and IHS, as well as their tribal partners, to develop District-specific written sexual violence guidelines.
  - Asking the Attorney General to meet with the Director of the FBI to discuss staffing, training, and evidence processing issues.
  - Asking the Attorney General to have USAOs and the FBI develop ways to recognize and reward Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSA) and FBI agents working in Indian Country who are particularly responsive to the needs of victims during the investigation and prosecution processes.
  - Asking the Attorney General to convene a Principal’s Meeting to ensure that the Committee’s recommendations are discussed with DOI/BIA and HHS/IHS, as critical partners with DOJ in addressing sexual violence issues.
- The memo also included a draft sexual violence guidelines template to assist Districts with developing sexual violence guidelines that would address the specific concerns of the Committee (such as documenting how child forensic interviews and medical forensic exams would be conducted).

- In late December 2014, the draft memo was sent by the Attorney General’s Office to a broad group of stakeholders, such as U.S. Attorneys via the Native American Issues Subcommittee of the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee.
- The initial rounds of feedback were reviewed and analyzed, and, in some cases, incorporated into the language of the memo, and resulting drafts were shared with the Attorney General’s staff.
- The memo was still under review by the Office of the Attorney General when Loretta Lynch was confirmed as Attorney General in 2015.
- In late summer 2015, the Office of the Attorney General staff met with Attorney General Lynch to review the memo and inform her of the feedback received on the memo. Attorney General Lynch expressed her interest in the memo's recommendations and commitment to implement the recommendations, provided that the feedback received from key stakeholders was adequately addressed.
- Additional stakeholders were invited by the Attorney General’s Office to review the memo, including the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee and leadership at the Executive Office of United States Attorneys. Additional rounds of feedback were reviewed and analyzed, and, as appropriate, incorporated into the memo.
- In September 2015, once the feedback was addressed, OVC submitted a revised memo to the Attorney General for her final review and approval.
- Attorney General Lynch approved the memo recommendations on October 9, 2015. Her office indicated that she now plans to issue a directive to USAOs to convene a meeting with federal and tribal partners for the purpose of developing written sexual violence guidelines, and plans to schedule a meeting with FBI Director Comey to discuss FBI staffing, training, and evidence processing.

Shannon congratulated the Committee on their hard work and perseverance. She stated, “It was a long journey, but your efforts have led to the Attorney General committing to take specific, relevant action based directly on your recommendations.”

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Sarah Deer and Allison Turkel reiterated their gratitude to the Committee members for their patience and dedication throughout the process. Several Committee members thanked Sarah Deer and Shannon May for their leadership and commitment to the work of the Committee. Shannon May explained that the Committee's charter officially ends on October 18, 2015, so this meeting served as the final meeting of the Committee. Shannon May stated that she or OVC might contact Committee members during the upcoming year to invite them to provide informal guidance to OVC and other federal agencies as the recommendations are implemented and as other opportunities arise.

Shannon May also mentioned the new Federal Victims in Indian Country Working Group, and explained that federal employees are currently identifying gaps in services, funding, training, and policy solutions, and plan to solicit feedback from tribal leaders and tribal members in the coming months. As such, she may reach out to Committee members for feedback.

Geri Wisner provided a traditional closing.

### **Adjournment**

Sarah Deer and Shannon May thanked the Committee members for their participation in the meeting and their service on the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

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Sarah Deer (Mvskoke)

Chair

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**Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Overview of Committee's Work to Date
- Status Update on the Recommendations Memo and Report
- Public Comments
- Traditional Closing
- Wrap Up and Next Steps