

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Thielen Student Health Center

For Immediate Release

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SART EXAMS MOVED TO THIELEN STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

Story County SART Exams are all being done at Iowa State's Medical Clinic

Ames, Iowa (5.4.2020) Thielen Student Health Center (TSHC) at Iowa State University is proud to support Story County by providing their facilities for all Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) exams.

Since the beginning of April, TSHC became the only facility in Story County open to do SART exams to lessen the risk of COVID19 exposure as well as ensure the survivor receives the access and dedicated time and care required. Sexual assault exams can take up to four hours and the team wanted to ensure a facility structure that provides optimal confidentiality and infection control. This process was also put in place to support the Story County emergency departments so they could focus on serving COVID-19 patients.

"Iowa State University police dispatch has been great." stated Jessica Shannon, TSHC Nursing and Patient Services Supervisor and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. "They have ensured that the process continues to be followed and that the appropriate team members are available."

Although the examiners have seen a small in decline in the number of reported assaults, those that have needed to be seen have appreciated not having to go to the local hospital or emergency department. In fact, a recent patient mentioned that they would not have sought care if they had been required to go to the hospital due to the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. If a patient arrives at the hospital or emergency department first, the team on site will ensure they are medically safe to transport to TSHC where SART will be waiting for them.

The sensitive process of conducting a sexual assault exam has not changed, with the exception of asking the patient to wear a mask. The team is still making time for exams and taking it at the pace set by the survivor. TSHC is equipped with the same equipment and resources as a hospital and the nurse examiners are still connecting the patient with community and campus resources to help the patient process the crime.

"By having this less crowded space, we can ensure additional confidentiality." Shannon continued. "By being examined, we're giving them their voice back and helping them find closure. They are in control again and dictate what they want from the exam. They set the pace."

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) are certified nurses or advanced nurse practitioners that have been specially trained in performing forensic exams as well as providing holistic patient-centered care for that patient during a traumatic time in their life. Story County has seven certified examiners.

Thielen Student Health Center is a full-service medical clinic in Ames, Iowa, staffed with physicians, advanced registered nurse practitioners, nurses, physical therapists and pharmacists. Thielen Student Health Center is a full-service, primary care health center specializing in students. Student Health understands the unique needs of students and offers an inclusive, non-judgmental environment for the diverse Iowa State University student body. To make an appointment with one of the providers at Student Health, students can call (515) 294-5801.

The **Story County SART (Sexual Assault Response Team)** consists of specially trained professionals from multiple agencies who work together to provide a community coordinated response to reports of sexual assault. Members of SART represent the fields of law enforcement, health care, advocacy and prosecution. They are employed in the public and private sectors (university, city and county governments, medical clinics and nonprofits). SART strives to provide the first response to ensure a consistent, compassionate and professional initial contact for victims and improve the likelihood of successful prosecutions. The program is based out of the Iowa State University Police Department in Ames, Iowa.

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