

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE  
Oregon State Capitol Building  
July 11, 2000 at 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: September 12. Committees will meet at 1:00 p.m. or as otherwise convened by the respective chairs, and the full Task Force meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m. and adjourn by 5:00 p.m. Place TBA.

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Attorney General Hardy Myers convened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. He circulated an attendance sheet. The completed attendance sheet is attached. He also distributed the roster of Task Force members. A copy of that roster, as corrected by those attending the meeting, is attached.

### **History of Task Force**

The Attorney General and Phyllis Barkhurst described the events that lead up to the formation of the Task Force:

- Victim advocates around the state have noticed how in the past 15 years the issues of child abuse and domestic violence have become community concerns leading to dramatic improvements in responses to and prevention of domestic violence by the criminal justice, social service, civil legal, education and medical systems in Oregon.
- They also noticed that during the same time period there has been little improvement made or resources allocated to address (non-child related) sexual assault.
- Seeing this as a concern, a group came together to organize a meeting of people from different disciplines all over the state who address (non-child) sexual assault and assess how we are doing in Oregon, identify needs, and identify strategies for meeting the needs.
- In May 1999, the first Oregon Sexual Assault Summit was held in Bend and sponsored by the Department of Justice Crime Victims Assistance Section, Sexual Assault Support Services (Eugene), the Oregon Health Division and the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- 130 people from the disciplines of victim advocacy, law enforcement, district attorney offices, public and emergency health, and education attended the two-day Summit. The group identified major needs in addressing (non-child) sexual assault in Oregon including lack of data or data collection, financial resources, training, protocols, and collaboration. Attorney General Hardy Myers was the keynote speaker at the event and pledged his support to better address this issue statewide.

- In July 1999, Summit organizers held a follow-up meeting in conjunction with the Oregon District Attorney Association conference. It was at this meeting that the decision was made to establish the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force and a steering committee was formed.
- Also at this meeting it became apparent that it was paramount to include those who work to address (non-child) sexual offenders in both corrections and treatment.
- The Task Force mission was discussed and participants agreed that it needed to include both responding to and prevention of (non-child) sexual assault.
- Fall 1999 – June 2000 the Steering Committee met and worked to identify Task Force appointees, gather information, and develop structural proposals to present at the first Task Force meeting

It was asked if there was a report generated from the Summit and if it could be disseminated to Task Force members. The response was that there was not a report per se but a list of findings and recommendations and that this would be disseminated.

### **Mission of Task Force**

The Task Force next discussed three alternative versions of a mission statement for itself:

- 1) To develop and support an effective statewide consistent and collaborative community approach to the response to and reduction of peer sexual assault.
- 2) To develop and support an effective, consistent, and collaborative statewide and community approach to the response to and reduction of peer sexual assault.
- 3) To develop and support an effective, consistent, and collaborative approach to the response to and reduction of peer sexual assault in Oregon.

During the discussion, several further suggestions were made. Karen Quigley noted that tribes in Oregon would want their sovereignty recognized in any formulation of the mission. Karen reported that she planned to meet with tribal officials on July 12 and would invite them to offer suggestions on the alternatives before the Task Force. The Task Force delayed final action on the mission statement until after the tribes had an opportunity to make suggestions.

### **Defining "sexual assault" as used by the Task Force**

The Task Force next discussed the definition it wished to apply to the conduct it would be examining. The Task Force began its discussion with a proposal to examine "peer sexual assault", a definition that Phyllis explained had been created to exclude cases of sexual abuse in which an adult victimized a child.

After discussion, The Task Force gave tentative approval to the following:

"Sexual assault refers to acts of forced or coerced sexual contact by perpetrators over 14 years of age against victims over 14 years of age."

## **Goals of the Task Force**

Next, the Task Force turned its attention to the list of proposed statewide and county goals included in the previous mailing to Task Force members. After discussion, the Task Force determined that it was unnecessary, in defining its workplan, to distinguish between statewide and county goals.

Instead, the two lists would be combined.

Noting that there are some Task Force members who haven't yet had the opportunity to participate in the goal formation up to this point, Attorney General Myers asked the Task Force to identify what they saw as the "urgent" issues:

- The need to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that is broad enough to include people at risk from becoming both victims and offenders
- Add the identification and increasing of funds to address (non-child) sexual assault to the list of goals
- The need to assess the role of law enforcement in cases where there is little chance of prosecution – wanting to be seen as a resource by victims and advocates, not simply the “bad” guy for not being able to arrest a perpetrator
- The need to change or take away the barriers to the prosecution of (non-child abuse) sexual offenses
- The formation of local multi-disciplinary teams for (non-child) sexual assault similar to the MDT's for child abuse
- Add the development of an effective judicial response to the list of other effective response goals
- The need to identify – and address – the causes of (non-child) sexual assault
- The gathering and sharing of information from other states and how they address (non-child) sexual assault

## **Task Force Structure**

The Task Force agreed to create a series of committees generally organized by subject matter. The Steering Committee will create agendas and organize presentations for each meeting of the Full Task Force. Five additional committees will be established:

- Needs Assessment & Data Collection Analysis Committee
- Criminal Justice
- Victim Response (advocacy, health issues)
- Offender Response (intervention, corrections and release),
- Education/Training & Public Awareness.

The committees are meant to address the issue of (non-child) sexual assault from the perspective of victims, perpetrators and the community. The Task Force also discussed the possibility of establishing a Primary Prevention Committee to examine how to stop sexual assault at its root by targeting specific educational efforts at people at-risk of becoming victims and offenders. The group decided that this was a very important piece and that (for now) it would be included in the work of the Education/Training and Public Awareness Committee.

The Task Force decided that there was a need and a wish to include non-Task Force members on committees. The Attorney General encouraged Task Force members to identify individuals for the committees and to send that information in to his office.

Task Force members were then given the opportunity to identify their preferences for committee assignments. Committee Preference Forms were filled out by those in attendance and will be distributed by mail to Task Force members who did not attend the first meeting. The Attorney General will make committee assignments prior to the September Task Force meeting. The Attorney General will also select a chair for each committee.

The Task Force set its next meeting for September 12, 2000.

