



**NEWS RELEASE**

March 20, 2013

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**Sexual Assault Response Team Announces New Guidelines**

On April 1, in conjunction with Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) for the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is announcing the implementation of its newly completed guidelines for handling sexual assault cases.

The announcement will take place at the April 1 meeting of the Adams County Commissioners at 9:30 a.m. at the Adams County Government Building, 4430 S. Adams County Parkway in Brighton.

“Law enforcement is at its best when agencies come together in collaboration to create best practices in the way certain crimes are investigated and prosecuted,” said District Attorney Dave Young. “The foundation of SART is that all agencies in the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District work together to investigate and prosecute sexual assault cases in a way that creates consistency throughout the jurisdiction,” said District Attorney Dave Young.

“I am very pleased that the guidelines are now in place to help us do that,” Young said. “SART also sets up a system for reviewing past cases so we can improve how we investigate and prosecute cases in the future. The goal is to keep the victim’s rights in mind and prevent victims of sexual assault from being re-traumatized by the legal process.”

The meeting will kick off a month of events for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, including the 2013 Sexual Assault Awareness Art Show that opens April 11 at The Armory, 300 Strong St., Brighton. Other events will be taking place state-wide.

The new SART guidelines reflect the best victim-centered, offender-focused and evidence-based practices available for a multidisciplinary approach to investigating and prosecuting sexual assault cases, said Michelle Wolff, coordinator of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District SART.

The guidelines recognize that sexual assault is different from other crimes because our culture tends to judge and blame the victim instead of assigning accountability to the offender, Wolff said. This blame adds another layer of pain to what is already one of the most heinous and personal crimes. The guidelines emphasize the importance of interacting with victims in culturally sensitive manners relating to age, gender and sexual orientation.

The 2013 Sexual Assault Response Guidelines represent a commitment from the 17<sup>TH</sup> Judicial District Attorney’s Office, law enforcement agencies, medical care and human service providers, and victim advocates from both criminal justice and community-based service programs to respect and care for victims as they deal with all stages of this life-altering crime.

Agencies involved in the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District SART, in addition to the district attorney’s office, include Adams County Department of Human Services, police departments of Arvada, Aurora, Brighton, Broomfield, Commerce City, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton and Westminster, the Broomfield Department of Health and Human Services, Rape Assistance and Awareness Project, Victim Outreach Inc., Moving to End Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Initiatives.

For more information on SART, please contact Michelle Wolff at [mwolff@da17.state.co.us](mailto:mwolff@da17.state.co.us).

**Dave Young**  
District Attorney

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**17th Judicial District**  
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