

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Reducing Backlog of SART Kits Spanning 30 Years**

**San Diego** – The San Diego Police Department has been working to reduce its historical backlog of Sexual Assault (SART) kits over the past 2 years. Significant time and resources were utilized to locate, inventory, research, and code each untested kit in the property room. Once the kits were coded, the SDPD worked with local stakeholders to identify which categories of kits could legally be tested and any foreign DNA profiles obtained entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) database. There are currently 1700 untested victim sexual assault kits in the property room, spanning 30 years.

The largest category of untested kits, approximately 500, consists of cases in which the victim did not want to participate in the law enforcement investigation. In order to ensure a victim centric process, the police department decided upon a novel approach. They proposed creating a working group to examine these cases one by one, and determine, together, which kits should be sent forward for testing. Keeping in mind that a victim has the right to stop their case at any time in the process, this working group reviewed these cases, discussed the options, and came to a decision based upon their review. Paramount to that process was assuring they honored the victim's wishes, and were not violating the civil rights of any potential consensual partners. The working group consists of a Sex Crimes Sergeant, a District Attorney, the Crime Laboratory Manager, and a Victim's Rights Advocate. Cases they agreed should be tested have been submitted to the laboratory. This plan was presented to City Council in January, 2018. The working group is nearly finished with the review of this category of cases, and testing of agreed upon kits is in process.

Of the remaining untested kits, several hundred of these consist of incidents in which the victim did not file a police report (Non-Investigative Reports), and kits in which the investigation showed that no crime occurred. Any DNA collected from these kits would violate the FBI's rules that govern DNA entry into the CODIS database. The remaining approximately 700 kits consist of those in which the suspect has been arrested and/or the suspect's DNA is already in CODIS, or those in which the allegations of the case cannot be substantiated. A working group will examine each of these cases to determine if potential DNA uncovered could be legally entered into CODIS.

Since January 2017, the crime laboratory has tested 990 kits, and cleared 4 categories of historical cases. The San Diego Police Department will continue to submit kits to its crime laboratory in an effort to reduce our historical backlog, concentrating on those kits which can be legally submitted for CODIS upload.

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