

## Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

### A continuum of comprehensive, compassionate care to vulnerable patients

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is a community-based program serving patients at our West Philadelphia and King of Prussia locations. Its aim is to provide comprehensive clinical care and minimize further trauma for young victims of sexual assault.

SART assembles a compassionate, experienced team committed to caring for the highly complex physical, emotional, and psychological needs of children and adolescents who are victims of sexual assault. The multidisciplinary team is comprised of specially trained nurses, nurse practitioners, child life therapists, social workers, pediatric emergency medicine and child abuse physicians, and trauma and special immunology providers. Every member of the team is trained to care for the young patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Multidisciplinary approach to care

The SART team has developed a comprehensive, standardized and developmentally appropriate approach that begins the moment a patient presents to the emergency department with concern for sexual assault. Initial care in the emergency department includes a thorough evaluation and medical history, a complete physical examination with photo documentation, forensic evidence collection, pregnancy and STI screening, and prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections.

The SART team is as focused on addressing patients' mental health as they are with their physical well-being and safety. Patients are connected with mental health services and child advocacy centers throughout the region. The expert team from Safe Place: The Center for Child Protection and Health works closely with each patient to address long-term emotional and physical needs. SART also works in coordination with social service agencies, law enforcement and the court system.

Once a patient is discharged, SART provides a coordinated continuum of care, from communicating lab results to prescribing medications and coordinating repeat testing for pregnancy, HIV screening and sexually transmitted infections.



We serve a tremendous need in the community and remain committed to offering an exemplary model of care that can be catered to the unique individual needs of each victim. We are constantly advancing and elevating the ways we can meet the clinical and behavioral needs for this vulnerable pediatric population.



— Jane M. Lavelle, MD  
Associate Director, CHOP  
Emergency Department



## Your philanthropic impact

By supporting SART, you can make a significant and meaningful impact in the following key areas:

### Salary support for a team of sexual assault examiners and coordinators to be available 24/7

Sexual assault experts provide sustainable, exceptional care to patients who are developmentally complex, recently victimized, and vulnerable to future abuse.

### Coverage for HIV prophylaxis medications for patients

Starting HIV risk reduction medications as soon as possible is key in the prevention of future health implications for pediatric patients of sexual assault. These medications are taken for 28 days to reduce the child's chance of contracting HIV, which is a lifelong illness.

### Expanding sexual assault education to multidisciplinary team

Continuing education is vital to provide the most current and appropriate care for this highly unique patient population. High-quality equipment (technology, supplies) leads to better patient outcomes and can assist in legal proceedings while enhancements to SART's training process can effect broader, widespread changes in the care of sexually assaulted children.

### Clothing for patients

Patients' clothes are taken for forensic evidence processing and can serve as key evidence during legal proceedings relating to the assault. Providing patients with new, clean clothing provides a sense of dignity and comfort.

## By the numbers

The sexual assault of children is an alarming public health problem in both scope and consequence.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, **1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys** will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old.

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The majority of victims of sexual abuse seen at CHOP are girls **younger than 16 years of age (84%)**, brought to the ED within the first 24 hours since the assault (most often between 4pm and midnight).

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Alleged perpetrators include extended family members, stranger abductors, and acquaintances.

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The majority of the patient population resides within Philadelphia and its surrounding suburbs. SART has also provided care for patients from other states such as New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Florida.

Since its inception in 2009, SART has provided care for **over 1,000 pediatric patients** treated for acute sexual assault (within 72 hours) and cases that may require other resources (such as HIV prophylaxis follow up, STI testing).

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Though the average age of these patients is **10 years old**, we have treated patients ranging as young as **2 months old to 19 years of age**.



## Sexual Assault Clinical Pathway

SART's approach to care has been guided by the creation of the acute pediatric sexual assault pathway, which has been used as a critical resource by many other institutions across the country. The evolution of the SART Clinical Pathway has been driven by constant quality improvement and research based on data from over 1,000 victims of sexual assault that have been treated at CHOP.

