



## ABOUT THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

### *Where small voices will be heard...*

The Sanilac County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) was established in November of 2013 as a community based, child-focused and child-friendly facility where representatives from many disciplines meet to discuss and make decisions about investigation, treatment and prosecution of child abuse cases. The CAC is the intervention program of the Sanilac County Child Abuse Prevention Council. The primary goal of all CACs is to ensure that children are not further victimized by the intervention systems designed to protect them. Since then we have grown by leaps and bounds. At the end of 2015 we became accredited through the [National Children's Alliance](#) which is a professional membership organization dedicated to helping local communities respond to allegations of child abuse in ways that are effective and efficient - and put the needs of child victims first.

### Services We Provide:

#### ***\*Forensic Interviews***

The CAC interviews child victims of sexual or severe physical abuse and witnesses to violent crimes as well as adults and children with cognitive disabilities. The victim is interviewed one time in a neutral, safe, and child-friendly setting by a specifically trained and experienced forensic interviewer. The interview is observed by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) comprised of prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child protection workers and children mental health and medical professionals.

#### ***\*Family/Victim Advocacy/Life Skills/Case Management***

The Victim Advocate will speak with the family/victim to address any social, medical and/or mental health needs through appropriate referrals. Advocate will also provide advocacy support services and case updates throughout the criminal justice process.

#### ***\*Counseling***

Our Counselor can provide in person, face to face crisis intervention & ongoing counseling for child victims of sexual/severe physical abuse and their non-offending caregivers. Counseling services are free of charge and offered on site, schools, homes and workplaces for the victim and non-offending caregivers.

## ***\*Forensic Medical Examinations of Victims***

*The sexual assault medical forensic exam is an examination of a sexual assault patient by a sexual assault nurse examiner who has specialized education and clinical experience in the collection of forensic evidence and treatment of these patients. The examination includes gathering information from the patient for the medical forensic history, an examination, coordinating treatment of injuries, documentation of biological and physical findings and collection of evidence from the patient with documentation of findings. We may also provide information, treatment, and referrals for Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy, mental health concerns, alcohol and substance abuse, and other non-acute medical concerns and follow-up as needed to provide additional healing, treatment, or collection of evidence. The exam is referred to as the "forensic medical examination" under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).*

## ***\*Forensic Medical Examinations of Suspects***

*This exam may be performed to assist law enforcement and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office in the legal collection of evidence in an alleged sexual assault by collecting and documenting evidence of biologics, force, resistance and or injury. A request for a suspect exam shall come from law enforcement, specifically a search warrant/court order. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) shall collect evidence specifically outlined in the search warrant/court order.*

## **Referral Process:**

*Policy of the Sanilac County Child Advocacy Center is to accept reports of an alleged victim of severe physical abuse or sexual abuse from law enforcement and/or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These are the only two entities that will be acknowledged as authorized referral sources.*

## **Meet our Team**

*Bryant Wilke, R.S., MPH - Executive Director  
Melissa Laming- Victim Advocate/Life Skills/Case Manager  
Tammy McPherson, MA, LPC, NCC - Forensic Interviewer/Clinical Coordinator  
Sara Schoenberg, MA, LPC - Counselor  
Matthew Gormley, MD - Medical Director  
Michelle McDonald, BSN, RN, EMT-P - SANE-A / SANE-P  
Tina Matthews, RN - SANE-A / SANE-P*

***\*To learn more about the CAC please visit our website [www.sanilacchild.org](http://www.sanilacchild.org)***

