



# Kansas Bureau of Investigation

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## **KBI's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative announces key findings, recommendations to prevent accumulation of evidence**

TOPEKA – The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) is pleased to announce that the Kansas Sexual Assault Kit Initiative has identified the underlying factors which contributed to the accumulation of unsubmitted sexual assault kits throughout the state of Kansas.

In 2014, the KBI initiated the Kansas Sexual Assault Kit Initiative and formed a statewide multidisciplinary working group tasked with evaluating the financial, legal, and systematic barriers to sexual assault kit testing. Since then, the group – which includes members of law enforcement, prosecutors, laboratory professionals, medical professionals, and victim advocates from across the state – worked to identify factors that contributed to the accumulation of over 2,220 unsubmitted sexual assault kits in Kansas.

With the group's input, the KBI developed recommendations intended to prevent future accumulation of sexual assault evidence.

"We had many partners who came together to pinpoint the diverse factors contributing to this accumulation," said KBI Director Kirk Thompson. "This collaboration sets the stage for effective implementation of the findings and recommendations identified."

The initiative is directed by KBI Executive Officer Katie Whisman, who co-authored a publication describing the working group's efforts and findings. The publication, which can serve as a model for other states across the country, cites a lack of training, a lack of resources, a lack of policy, and a lack of societal awareness as factors contributing to the accumulation. Additionally, it identifies specific recommendations that Kansas stakeholders can utilize when developing standards and policies in an effort to create a sustainable and effective response to sexual assaults.

The publication was approved by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), who awarded the KBI a National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) federal grant in

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2016. The grant is helping the KBI reduce the number of unsubmitted sexual assault kits across the state, arrest and prosecute violent offenders, and support victims.

The findings and recommendations will be shared with agencies in Kansas who have a role in responding to sexual assault, in an effort to prevent another accumulation of kits. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to prevent victimization by identifying more perpetrators of sexual assault, including serial offenders, while gaining justice for more victims and increasing public safety.

The full publication, *Underlying Factors Contributing to the Accumulation of Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits in Kansas*, can be found online at:

<http://www.kansas.gov/kbi/news/72517.shtml>.

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