Taking on the Challenge of Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits

Panelists:
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Moderator: Bethany Backes, Social Science Analyst, National Institute of Justice, US Department of Justice
What is NIJ?

- Research, development, and evaluation arm of USDOJ
- Nation’s leader in scientific research on crime and justice

**Mission:**
- Improve knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues through science
- Provide objective and independent knowledge and tools to reduce crime and promote justice, particularly at the state, tribal, & local levels
Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Evidence

• Large quantities of SAKs being found across the U.S. in large and small jurisdictions

• Understanding “why” so much evidence is unsubmitted

• Jurisdictions struggling with “how” to address unsubmitted evidence

• Need for established tools and information to assist jurisdictions
NIJ Addresses Unsubmitted SAKs

• Funded two Action Research Projects to:
  – Examine underlying nature of the problem of unsubmitted SAKs
  – Identify effective and sustainable solutions pertaining to auditing, collaboration, victim notification, investigation, and prosecution

• Ongoing collaborative work with other Federal, State, and local agencies to better understand the extent of unsubmitted SAKs
Purpose of this Webinar

- Discuss the two action research projects funded by NIJ in Detroit and Houston

- Preliminary findings and recommendations on:
  - Underlying factors
  - Partnership and collaboration
  - Triaging and processing kits
  - Victim notification
  - Jurisdiction-specific policy and practice changes
Resources

- See [http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html) for a list of resources including:
  - [The Road Ahead: Unanalyzed Evidence in Sexual Assault Cases](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html) (PDF)
  - [Sexual Assault Kits Action Research Projects, interviews with the experts](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html)
  - [Untested Evidence in Sexual Assault Cases](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html)
  - [National Institute of Justice-FBI Research Partnership](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html)
  - [Houston Sexual Assault Research, Sam Houston University](http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/xchat.html)