

FROM CRISIS TO CARE: CAC MEDICAL SERVICES



To make a medical services referral to MCAC, submit a referral form through our website www.eupcac.org/referral. Our Interviewer may also recommend a referral for medical services if a Forensic Interview results in a full or partial disclosure of abuse or neglect. For after-hours emergency referrals, call our FI at **906-322-8944**. She will work with our SANE to triage and schedule services.

ABOUT MASHKAWIZII CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER'S IN- HOUSE MEDICAL SERVICES

PHYSICAL EXAM

A head-to-toe wellness check to assess for injuries, reassure the child, and document any findings in a safe, supportive environment. It is common for an assault to result in non-visible injuries or bruising. MCAC is fortunate to have access to technology that can photograph bruising before it is physically visible on the skin. We do **not** have access to in-house X-Ray, CT, or MRI imaging equipment.

SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAM

A non-invasive, child-sensitive exam performed by our specially trained provider to assess for signs of sexual abuse and ensure the child's health and safety.

FORENSIC EVIDENCE COLLECTION

When appropriate and within recommended time frames, our SANE collects evidence in a way that protects both the child and the legal process.

STI TESTING & PROPHYLAXIS

We offer confidential testing for STIs and provide preventative medications when appropriate.

**UNLIKE OUR FORENSIC INTERVIEW SERVICES,
MCAC IS HONORED TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE
MEDICAL SERVICES TO BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULT
VICTIMS.**

MEET KRISTINE

Our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), Kristine Balash, is also a Masters Level Advanced Practice Registered Nurse and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. She hopes to expand our scope to include mental health services in the near future.

Desk Phone

906-248-8568

Email

kmbalash@baymills.org



Mashkawizii CAC www.eupcac.org

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WHEN TO MAKE A MEDICAL SERVICES REFERRAL TO MCAC

FORENSIC EVIDENCE COLLECTION TIMELINE

In Michigan, the general guideline for forensic evidence collection is within 120 hours for adults and within 72 hours for children but in certain situations evidence may still be present after this timeframe. If the ideal timeframe for evidence collection has passed, seeking a medical evaluation remains crucial to ensure the overall well-being and safety of a child. Even if the alleged abuse happened in the past it may still be beneficial to have an exam conducted to ensure the health of the child.

WHEN THERE IS A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

If there is a disclosure about sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect it is important to make a referral for medical services. If there is suspicion of abuse or neglect but no disclosure, or the disclosure made does not indicate a need for an immediate exam, an interview may be conducted prior to an exam to limit the traumatization of the child and support the investigation.

LAWS AND GUIDELINES

MANDATED MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR ABUSE VICTIMS

Under Michigan law, when a child is suspected of being a victim of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or human trafficking, the supervising agency is required to ensure that the child receives medical attention.

COURT ORDERED MEDICAL EVALUATIONS

Michigan law permits a court to order an evaluation/examination of a child by a physician, dentist, psychologist, or psychiatrist. This underscores the importance of specialized medical assessments in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Our nurse must receive consent from the parent or guardian as long as they are non-offending. The patient has the option to have a non-offending support person or advocate present during the exam. The patient must provide assent to have an exam conducted and **has the autonomy to stop the exam at any time for any reason.**

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WHY A CAC MAY BE THE BEST PLACE FOR A FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAM

CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

CACs are specifically designed for children. The spaces are calm, non-threatening, and staffed with professionals trained in child development and trauma-informed care – unlike ERs, which can be chaotic, clinical, and overwhelming for a child victim. A calmer environment helps reduce retraumatization and improves the quality of disclosure and cooperation.

SPECIALIZED, TRAUMA-INFORMED PROVIDERS

CAC medical staff (e.g., Pediatric SANE nurses) are specially trained to perform forensic medical exams– not just to collect evidence, but to provide compassionate, developmentally appropriate care. ER staff may not have specialized pediatric or forensic training, which can lead to missed evidence, improper documentation, or additional trauma.

CASE COORDINATION AND ONGOING SUPPORT

Medical findings are communicated directly to law enforcement and CPS. Exams are done in sync with forensic interviews and case timelines, and evidence collection meets forensic standards and legal admissibility. This coordination streamlines investigations, helps build stronger legal cases, and increases access to services for the family.

MORE APPROPRIATE USE OF RESOURCES

ERs are for acute medical emergencies. Using a CAC instead, frees up ER capacity, reduces unnecessary medical costs, and prevents lengthy ER waits and rushed exams. CACs are built for these cases – not just a backup option.

LONG-TERM EMOTIONAL IMPACT

When a child experiences a traumatic medical exam in a busy ER, especially right after abuse, it can create long-lasting fear or associated with hospitals. Later in life, even routine visits may trigger panic or trauma responses. By using CAC medical services, we help protect a patient's future sense of safety in healthcare settings. Our goal isn't just evidence collection – it's healing. Using a CAC helps preserve a patient's trust in the medical system, which they will rely on for the rest of their lives.

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WHEN A HOSPITAL MIGHT BE A BETTER OPTION FOR MEDICAL SERVICES

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If the patient has uncontrolled bleeding, head trauma or loss of consciousness, or suspected internal breaks/sprains/bleeds requiring advanced internal imaging, the ER may be a more fit option for an exam. The ER is equipped to stabilize life-threatening conditions first.

TIMELINESS AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

We understand that by serving 3 rural counties, our center may not be accessible to some families and a hospital may be closer or more convenient. Please reach out to our center if you are in need of financial assistance for gas to travel to our center. We may be able to help!

PER MDT OR LAW ENFORCEMENT DISCRETION

If there is a clear need for immediate safety, custody issues, or if the child is already in an ER for another medical issue, the MDT may determine that the ER is the best initial route.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND TIPS

AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAM IS DONE, WILL IT BE SENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT?

Whether or not a sexual assault kit is turned over to law enforcement is at the discretion of the patient. Kits that are not sent are sometimes called “anonymous kits” and are stored for one year.

HOW MUCH DO MEDICAL SERVICES COST AT MASHKAWIZII CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER?

All of the services offered at MCAC are free of charge and will not be billed to your insurance provider.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR MY MEDICAL APPOINTMENT?

While steps like showering and changing clothes may damage or destroy evidence, we want you to take whatever steps you feel you need. A forensic exam can still be completed, and evidence may still be found. It may be helpful to photograph any visible marks that could disappear prior to your exam. It may also be beneficial to bring any soiled clothing or fabric from the attack with you in a sealed bag for evidence collection. Please visit www.eupcac.org/your-appointment for more tips or call our center with any questions you may have. It is important that you feel as comfortable and as safe as possible during this process.