



## Criminalistics Section - 2016

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### **B213 The Testing of Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Kits: An Update on the National Institute of Justice-Federal Bureau of Investigation (NIJ-FBI) Sexual Assault Kit Partnership**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have updated knowledge concerning federal support through the NIJ-FBI Sexual Assault Kit Partnership to reduce the number of Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs) waiting to be tested in the nation's law enforcement agencies.

The presentation will impact the forensic science community by conveying information the Partnership has garnered with regard to the collection, processing, and testing of SAK evidence from law enforcement agencies across the country.

The NIJ — the research, development, and evaluation agency of the United States Department of Justice — leads the nation in supporting the forensic sciences through research and by providing state and local crime laboratories with funding to help process and test evidence more efficiently in an effort to reduce backlogs. This presentation will provide an update on the NIJ-FBI Sexual Assault Kit Partnership initiative designed to help inform evidence collection, processing practices, and testing protocols for SAKs.

This research initiative began accepting SAKs from law enforcement agencies in September 2015 and has been helping to address a major need in this nation's forensic science and criminal justice communities to support state and local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to reduce the number of unsubmitted SAKs. The focus of this effort has been in the collection and analysis of valuable data concerning the nature of sexual assault evidence contained in previously unsubmitted SAKs. The effort has begun yielding knowledge related to the various processes associated with the intake of sexual assault evidence into the laboratory as well as with screening, testing, and analysis. An understanding of these processes is fundamental in the effort to inform best practices for collecting, analyzing, and testing evidence from sexual assault cases, particularly when faced with the processing of large quantities of unsubmitted SAKs. The knowledge garnered as a result of this continuing effort will be used to fulfill the long-term goal of improving current and future best practices for collecting quality evidence and processing SAKs in a more timely and efficient manner. This initiative directly supports the goal of carrying out analyses of samples from untested, unsubmitted SAKs so DNA profiles can be developed and placed in the National DNA Index System (NDIS). More violent crimes are solved as more DNA profiles are placed in the NDIS, which is considered one part of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) program of support for criminal justice DNA databases as well as for the software used to run these databases. The NDIS has been particularly helpful to investigations that are very old and no longer producing new leads. The Partnership has already begun generating CODIS hits throughout the nation, and the upload of hundreds of eligible profiles generated from DNA analysis as a result of this research provides direct aid in the investigation of violent crimes involving sexual assault.

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#### **Sexual Assault Kit, DNA Testing, Sexual Assault**