**ST. FRANCIS:**

 When Backup is called, obviously ALL correspondence is confidential.

The St. Francis process/protocol is as follows:

The On-Call St. Francis Back Up Worker is a TRAINED Rape Advocate.

They will meet the victim at the hospital to console and comfort them. However, just because the victim goes to the hospital, it does not mean that any report MUST be filed.

 An incorrect assumption is that once an advocate is called, everything is “legalized” and police are automatically involved. THAT IS INCORRECT.

Actually, this is the time when the victim has all the power handed back to them, which was taken from the rape. (Utilizing the phrase of “taking back power” is very important, as the victim OFTEN feels broken and powerless)

It is important to express to the victim CLEARLY, that from this point forward - EVERYTHING – every single step… is up to the victim 100%.

They are able to walk into any hospital and state:

“I was raped and I want a rape kit”

OR

“I was raped want to be tested for STDs and pregnancy.”

Being a rape victim, ALL services are FREE OF CHARGE & CONFIDENTIAL. This is important to understand, because this means that the victim will NOT get any bills in the mail, nor is their insurance involved. It is important that the victim realizes that their parents/spouse/partner will NOT receive a bill in the mail, nor will it go on their insurance. EVERYTHING, including counseling, is 100% free and confidential.

Additionally, once the rape victim goes to the hospital, what happens there will be their discretion and their decision.

It is important to go to the hospital, because even if they do not wish to press charges, they will not be forced to do so.

HOWEVER, they will still be tested and given medication to avoid STDs and pregnancy. This is key.

If the victim requests, the police will take the report and the police will bag all the evidence. However again I must reiterate nothing further will happen unless the rape victim requests legal action to be taken.

The police department however will hold all evidence gathered from the rape kit for a period of five (5) years.

This way if the victim chooses in 3 years that they now want to press charges all the evidence is preserved and they can go forward at that point.