

Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence (NR-SAE) in Texas

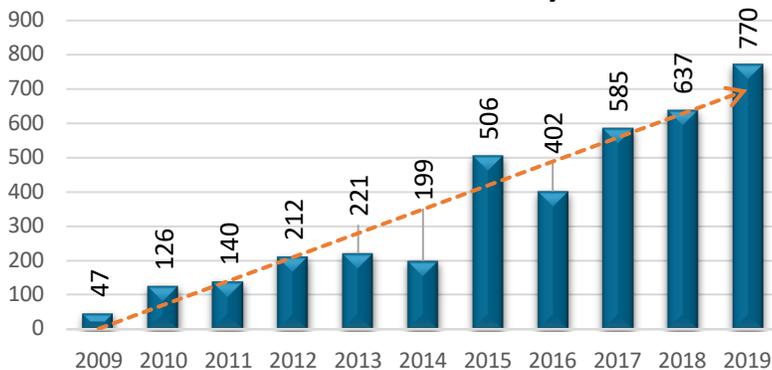
HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Texas' Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence (NR-SAE) program was created in 2009 through House Bill 2626 of the 81st Legislature.¹ Through this program, survivors who do not wish to immediately report their assault to law enforcement can still obtain a forensic medical exam. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) stores the collected evidence for up to 5 years in case the survivor decides to report the assault and release the evidence.

The NR-SAE program allows for the timely collection of evidence in situations where a survivor wants to delay reporting or is unsure if they want to make a report.

NR-SAE EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS

NR-SAE Submissions by Year



Reporting to law enforcement can be difficult. Survivors choose not to make a law enforcement report for a variety of reasons including:²

- Concern for their safety
- Feelings of shame/embarrassment
- Fear of not being believed
- Perceived risk to employment or immigration status

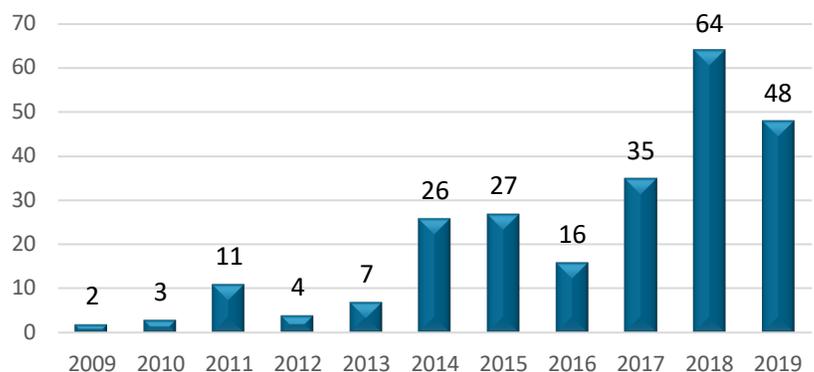
Having the opportunity to collect evidence without making a report may lessen barriers to reporting in the future.

From 2009 to 2019, the number of NR-SAEs submitted per year increased from 47 to 770 (an increase of 1,538%).

NR-SAE RELEASED FROM DPS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The NR-SAE is preserved for a maximum of 5 years in case the survivor decides to make a report. If the survivor makes a report, the investigating law enforcement agency can request the NR-SAE from DPS.
- Cumulatively, **6.3%** of NR-SAEs were released to a law enforcement agency to support an investigation (2009 to 2019).

NR-SAEs Released to Law Enforcement After a Report

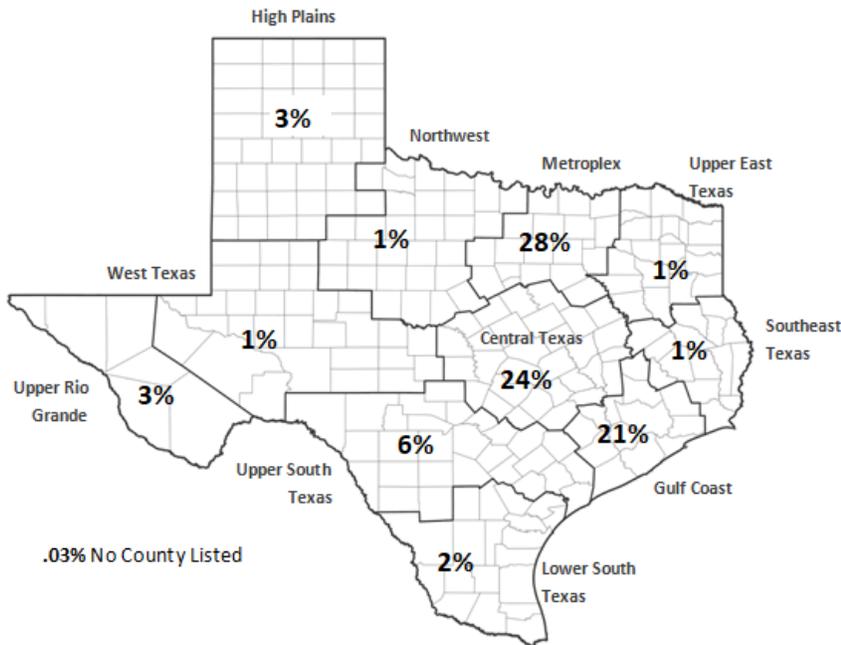


¹ H.B. 2626, 81st Texas Legislature, 2009 Reg. Sess. (2009). <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/81R/billtext/pdf/HB02626F.pdf#navpanes=0>

² Busch-Armendariz, N.B., Olaya-Rodriguez, D., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Wachter, K., & Sulley C. (2015). *Health and well-being: Texas statewide sexual assault prevalence*. Austin, TX: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin. <https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/TX-SA-Prevalence-Study-Final-Report.pdf>

NR-SAE SUBMISSIONS TO DPS BY REGION

NR-SAE Submissions by Region, 2009 to 2019



Three Highest Non-Report Regions

- Metroplex (1,078 submissions)
- Central Texas (925 submissions)
- Gulf Coast (822 submissions)

Three Lowest Non-Report Regions

- Upper East Texas (44 submissions)
- Southeast Texas (45 submissions)
- West Texas (48 submissions)

This map represents NR-SAE submissions received by DPS for each Health and Human Services Commission region. Numerous factors may impact regional differences, including but not limited to, population density (higher population areas may have higher sexual assault rates and exams), availability of information about the NR-SAE program, and access to medical facilities (areas without medical facilities may have lower sexual assault exam rates).

METHODS

These data are based on a review of all NR-SAE submissions received by DPS from the NR-SAE program's inception in 2009 through December 31, 2019. Researchers cleaned data sets and merged data variables where appropriate. Researchers then conducted descriptive analysis and examined patterns and trends over time.

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