



State of New Mexico
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

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State Auditor Helps Complete Statewide Count of “Rape Kit” Backlog

Aims to bring transparency to statewide backlog, will provide best practices to policymakers

SANTA FE, NM – Today, the Office of the State Auditor announced the completion of the statewide count of untested Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (commonly known as “rape kits”). Having a complete and accurate number of untested rape kits in the state is a first step at reducing the backlog and arming policymakers with information needed to bring justice and closure to cases. With responses of all relevant law enforcement agencies collected, the total number of untested kits in New Mexico is 5,406.

“For the first time, our state is equipped with a complete tally of untested kits sitting in law enforcement inventories. Bringing transparency to the backlog is a first step towards fixing this issue, which is critical to survivors and our public safety,” stated State Auditor Tim Keller. “The Department of Public Safety, State Police, crime labs, local law enforcement and stakeholders did a great job beginning to uncover key information that can be used to address the backlog.”

Earlier this year, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) sent a series of letters to law enforcement agencies asking how many untested kits were stored in their inventories. The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) followed up with the agencies that did not respond to DPS’ multiple attempts.

“Our inventory of sexual assault kits in law enforcement evidence vaults around New Mexico is complete, thanks to our partners in law enforcement, the victim advocacy community, and the State Auditor’s Office,” stated Department of Public Safety Secretary Greg Fouratt. “As soon as reasonably possible, we need to resolve the backlog by testing the kits and entering their results into our nation’s criminal DNA database. Then we need to improve and streamline the process by which such kits are collected, submitted to the lab, and analyzed.”

As a next step beginning in January, the State Auditor will review internal controls that may be contributing to the backlog. The OSA will identify common issues and best practices to guide policymakers in efforts to prevent another backlog from happening.

The Office of the State Auditor helps government work better by providing transparency and accountability for government spending; informing policy choices; and tackling fraud, waste and abuse. OSA is an independently elected executive agency responsible for examining the use of public dollars in New Mexico.