

Virginia Held its First Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Nurse/Forensic Examiner Clinical Skills Lab

Gleibys Gonzalez, *Sexual Assault Forensic Services Coordinator*

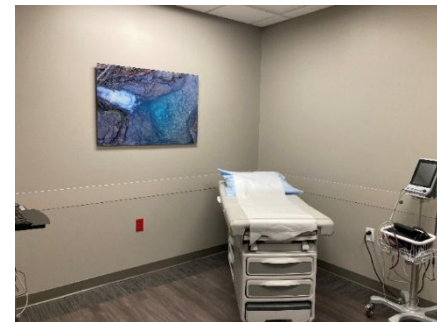


In March 2023, Virginia held its first Adult/Adolescent Sexual Assault Nurse/Forensic Examiner Clinical Skills Lab at Valley Urgent Care in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The Clinical Skills Lab was sponsored by the DCJS Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Coordinator Program, in partnership with the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), the Office of the Attorney General, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Virginia Victims Fund.

The purpose of the Lab, as stated in the IAFN curriculum document, was: “to prepare the didactically trained SAFE/SANE for clinical aspects of the adult/adolescent sexual assault medical-forensic examination, regardless of the provider’s practice setting.” *

Eleven nurses, who have all completed 40-hours of the Adult/Adolescent Didactic Training, came to Harrisonburg from all over the Commonwealth for this weekend-long, intensive, and hands-on training. The training used the “Clinical Skills Lab Curriculum,” * developed by the International Association of Forensic Nurses, as well as trainers and Gynecological Training Associates (GTA) contracted by the IAFN.



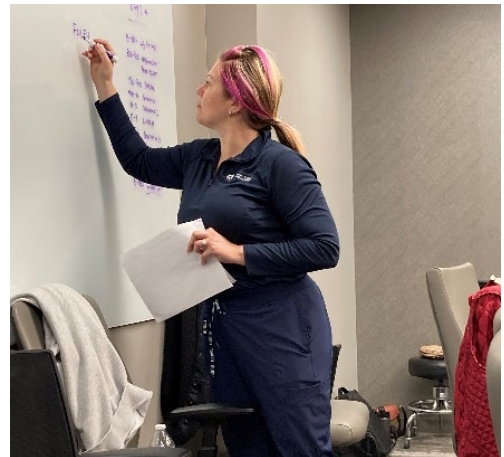
The GTAs served as live sim patients, which offered a unique opportunity for students to perform multiple speculum exams and practice trauma informed care in mock scenarios.

Karen Carroll, Erin Pollitt, and Megan Crowe served as the trainers, and each one offered a wealth of experience and knowledge in forensic nursing. Additionally, they were incredible mentors and awesome instructors! Here is a bit more about their experiences and backgrounds:



Karen Carroll currently serves as a Forensic Nursing Specialist with the International Association of Forensic Nurses, providing Training and Technical assistance. She has been a Registered Nurse for over 40 years, and nationally certified as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner of Adult/Adolescent patients since 2002 and Pediatric patients since 2014. She has been a member of the International Association of Forensic Nurses since 1998. Karen served as the Nursing Director of the Forensic Acute Care Team (FACT) in Westchester County, NY, the former Associate Director of the Bronx Sexual Assault Response Team, and the first Coordinator of the Westchester SANE Program. She has completed over 3000 forensic examinations and frequently provides expert witness testimony in criminal court for prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Erin Pollitt is the Executive Director of District of Columbia Forensic Nurse Examiners (DCFNE), a nonprofit in Washington, DC that provides trauma-informed, patient-centered care to survivors of sexual, intimate partner, and domestic violence. Erin has practiced as a forensic nurse examiner since 2011, and her work has received recognition from the International Association of Forensic Nurses, *Baltimore Magazine*, and the *Maryland Daily Record*, among others. Her article, "Alternate Light Source Findings of Common Topical Products," was named Research Article of the Year by the *Journal of Forensic Nursing*.



Megan Crowe is a Forensic Nursing Specialist, providing Training and Technical assistance to those performing SANE services. She has been a Registered Nurse since 2003 and has focused on Women's Services throughout her nursing career. Megan has worked as a SAFE Program Coordinator and holds a master's degree in Forensic Nursing.

Students were fully engaged throughout the two-day Clinical Skills training. They also asked important questions, participated in relevant and lively discussions, and illustrated their commitment to trauma informed care.



Here is what the nurses had to say about the training:

“Not only do I feel more educated through this experience, I feel empowered. I feel like I’m leaving this training as a better nurse.” – Lauren Beaudoin, Bon Secours Violence Response Team

“My clinical skills lab experience was nothing short of incredible! I was able to gain hands on skills that will benefit my patients and the community I serve. I am so thankful to have been a part of this training while being surrounded by such supportive and strong women.” – Elizabeth Dammann, Carilion Clinic Forensic Nurse Examiner Program

“This weekend allowed me to learn and grow so much as a Forensic Nurse. The wealth of knowledge that was provided in just two, short, days will allow for me to better care for all the patients I encounter in the coming future.” – Mikki Mathews, Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Adult Forensic Examiner Team

“What a great opportunity to learn, gain skills, and confidence with a supportive group of peers and instructors. Every nurse should have this opportunity.” – Nancylee Kershaw, Augusta Health Forensic Nurse Team

“I am very thankful for the opportunity to have attended the forensic skills lab. The instructors were phenomenal and very knowledgeable. I felt empowered and more confident in my forensic skills at the conclusion of the lab. I was elated to meet my colleagues and share tales of our profession. I am proud to be a Forensic Nurse Examiner!” – Susila Raju, UVA Forensic Team, University of Virginia Medical Center

* <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:d47ef7ed-9924-3c1d-a603-28e802ce0128>