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# Wisconsin Forensic Nurse News

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## Welcome to our newsletter!

The Wisconsin Department of Justice SANE Program is excited to provide this periodic newsletter to forensic nurses across the state. Inside this newsletter you will find pertinent information such as crime lab information, DOJ initiatives, clinical information, training opportunities and more! We welcome your feedback!

## WiSAKI Testing Completed

Attorney General Josh Kaul announced updates detailing Wisconsin's progress in obtaining justice for survivors of sexual assault and the prosecution of perpetrators now that all sexual assault kits designated for testing have been tested. Additional data has been updated and added to [wisaki.doj.wi.gov](http://wisaki.doj.wi.gov) including new prosecution progress details.

"The Wisconsin Department of Justice continues to work with law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim advocates to fight for justice for survivors," said AG Kaul. "Prosecuting the violent offenders who commit sexual assault is critical to keeping our communities safe." As of January 31, 2020, 1,038 kits with foreign DNA identified have been added to a national database of DNA profiles, out of 4,472 tested sexual assault kits. The latest data can be found at [wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/data-results](http://wisaki.doj.wi.gov/numbers/data-results). Testing was complete for all kits designated for testing in the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative in November 2020.

### Additional Updated Data

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has reviewed 1,406 cases and continues to review cases. These case reviews include examining police reports, identifying potential safety risks to the public and the survivor(s), identifying legal impediments to a renewed investigation or prosecution such as statute of limitations concerns or plea agreements, assessment of whether survivor notification is appropriate, and whether additional samples are needed from a suspect(s). At this time, 40 cases have been referred for a charging decision. Some of these cases are referred back to DOJ for possible prosecution, and some have not resulted in criminal charges.

A total of 12 criminal cases related to SAKI kits have been filed. A breakdown of the status of these cases can be found [here](#).

As of January 31, 2020, a decision has been made to notify survivors about the results of 127 sexual assault kits; notification was not able to be made in connection with 33 of those kits. At this time, notification is not being made about the results of the testing of 1,105 sexual assault kits. Cases associated with 419 sexual assault kits remain in the review process for possible survivor notification about kit results. The decision whether to notify a survivor can change over time.

Reasons provided by a multi-disciplinary team or local law enforcement for not notifying survivors include:

- Sexual assault kit testing was inconclusive, not identifying a suspect;
- The case related to the sexual assault kit was already prosecuted or there is already a warrant issued but the suspect has not been located;
- Case currently not proceeding to prosecution because the DNA testing provided no new information or investigative leads;
- The survivor connected with the sexual assault kit chose not to report to law enforcement; and,
- Notification might not be safe or appropriate at this time depending on survivor or dynamics of the case.

For survivors looking for information about their kit, contact the law enforcement agency where the assault was reported, a local sexual assault service provider, or the DOJ Office of Crime Victim Services at 1-800-446-6564.

For more information and data about Wisconsin's effort to end the backlog of sexual assault kits, go to [wisaki.wi.doj.gov](http://wisaki.wi.doj.gov).

# Q&A with the Crime Lab



## Q: Why can't kits be tested if the evidence was collected 5 days/120 hours after the assault?

This is based on the limitations of current DNA technologies used in forensic DNA laboratories across the country, to include the Wisconsin Crime Lab (WSCL). This 120-hour/5day guideline was issued by the Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGDM) for forensic DNA testing laboratories and is also referenced and further described under Recommendation #7 in the "National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach" document issued by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in 2017. The WSCL prioritizes and examines items of evidence when submitted by law enforcement for a sexual assault case based on specific case circumstances. The Crime Lab Information Sheet contained within the kit, and filled out by the FNE, is the primary communication tool between the nurse and the crime lab, and will help to direct the analyst which evidence to test. Not everything in the kit is routinely tested. **If you are working with a patient beyond the 120 hours, other evidence can still be collected, such as clothing or bedding.** This may be more valuable forensically.

## Q: Can I package small clothing items (socks, underwear) inside the kit?

It is requested that articles of clothing collected during the exam to be kept outside of the kit. Please separately package each clothing item in a paper bag, that is then sealed and appropriately labeled to describe the item contained inside. This is outlined in the Medical-Forensic Evidence Collection Kit Instructions contained inside the kit.

## Q: Are there any exceptions to this?

The exception to consider is with the patient's underwear collected during a SANE exam of a Non-Reporting/Undecided Patient. In this context, collection of the patient's underwear into a sealed and labeled paper bag (not envelope) and then placing it inside of the kit is desired. As the WSCL will store the evidence for up to 10 years, evidence storage of multiple items of clothing isn't practical; therefore, submission of anything other than the underwear isn't acceptable. As the underwear is a small item of clothing that is often of probative value forensically and is easily be packaged and stored within the kit, the WSCL is accepting of this practice as a routine when involving the exam and evidence collection from a Non-Reporting patient.

# Clinical Skill: Toulidine Blue

## Q: What are some general tips to keep in mind when using Toulidine Blue?

A: . Toulidine Blue, or Forensic Blue Dye, can be a useful tool to visualize microtrauma to the genital and anal areas. Always use the dye prior to a speculum or anoscopy exam (to avoid causing microtrauma from the insertion) and after external evidence collection (to avoid wiping off any evidence that may be present). Liberally apply the dye to the area, then wipe off excess gently with lubricating jelly on a 4x4. This will remove the excess and reveal any dye uptake to damaged tissues.



The dye will stain clothing, so use caution. Some patients also report a slight stinging sensation during application, especially if tears or lacerations are present. Dye should not be used to "hunt" for injuries that you don't already see with your eye; it should be used to highlight and confirm what you already see. Photograph, with permission, and document the dye uptake.

# Program Spotlight: Ascension Goes Mobile

## *Expanded services in the Milwaukee vicinity*

The Sexual Assault Treatment Center at All Saints in Racine has been in existence since 1992, serving adults and adolescents since its inception. Pediatric patients were included since 2008. For many years there has been a number of hospitals in Milwaukee area under our past Wheaton Franciscan umbrella and with the Ascension Wisconsin acquisition, it seemed the perfect time to address the need of taking care of sexual assault patients where they present. Historically if a sexual assault patient presented to any of the ER's in the Ascension system other than Racine, they were medically screened/cleared and told we were unable to provide the services they needed and their option was to be sent elsewhere.

Rachel approached one of the executives in the Ascension system and explained the disparities in this approach. With her assistance, they wrote a grant to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to start up a mobile SATC program. This grant allowance as well as funding from the Ascension Foundation allowed the Ascension mobile SATC to open in August. The program currently has 4 trained FNEs and is actively training 5 additional hires. The goal is to have a staff of 15-20 FNEs. They currently serve seven hospitals, All Saints in Racine, Franklin, St. Francis, St Joseph's, Columbia St Mary's Milw, Columbia St Mary's Ozaukee, and Elmbrook Memorial in Brookfield..

*"We all know the strength it takes a victim to present anywhere and then be turned away. This was against our mission"*

There is a forensic bag, camera and lock box at each Ascension facility. Some facilities have a dedicated forensic exam room, others do not. Those patients are then seen in ED rooms. Rachel's hope is to have a forensic room at each facility.

Starting the program has had its struggles. SATC has tripled its volume since the program began in August, with multiple facilities having patients present at the same time. "Our program thankfully has very flexible, compassionate nurses who all value the mission of serving patients where they present," says Rachel. Future plans include creating an advocacy program to meet the expanding needs within the area.

Ascension is one of the forerunner Hospital systems in Wisconsin that has been the initiator of educating the entire hospital system (almost 20 hospitals) on human trafficking. They did a two year project, using a 3 tier system, of educating the hospitals initially with 4 different hour long modules, followed up with an in-person educational session at each of these hospitals across the state. Through this process they were able to learn different resources available throughout the State and develop key resource people at each site to be able to talk with potential victims in a trauma informed way. The southeast section of the state has been integral in assisting at least a dozen HT victims to safety.

Rachel Cortez, RN, CEN, SANE-A, SANE-P can be reached at [rachel.cortez@ascension.org](mailto:rachel.cortez@ascension.org) or 414-647-5207

# 23 New FNEs!



The following nurses completed Adult/Adolsecent Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner training in February and are now clinically prepared to provide forensic nursing services. Congratulations!

Stacy Allen  
Meghan Ariotti  
Jenelle Aspinwall  
Tricia Beaulieu  
Michael Ann Bevill  
Marrisa Boyer  
Brooke Briesemeister  
Stephanie Cahlamer  
Gwenn Chamberlin  
Clare Costello  
Alyson Gartland  
Stephanie Goss  
Daniela Granados-Moody  
Audrey Huber  
Marie Lepak  
Shuba Samuel  
Jennifer Schwartz  
Alison Sterr  
Angela Tanner  
Charlene Thomas  
Sarah Traynor  
Laurna Ward  
Jeni Weber

# Upcoming trainings

## **Adult/Adolescent SANE Class (SANE-A)**

March 30 – April 3, 2020 – Marshfield St. Clare's, Weston

Clinical Skills Lab: June 11, 2020 – LaCrosse

September 14-18, 2020 – Gundersen Medical Center, LaCrosse

Clinical Skills Lab: October 1, 2020 - LaCrosse

## **Effective Use of SANE Evidence in the Courtroom**

*HOSTED BY: WI-DOJ REGIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN RESOURCE  
PROSECUTORS*

April 24, 2020 – Sheboygan Health & Human Services Building

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RVAWRPSANE2020>

## **Pediatric SANE Class (SANE-P)**

October 26-30, 2020 – ThedaCare Regional Medical Center, Appleton

## **March WI-IAFN Chapter Meeting**

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – Mercyhealth Hospital & Trauma Center, Janesville

[www.wiforensicnurses.org](http://www.wiforensicnurses.org)

## **Child Abuse & Exploitation Conference & Luncheon**

March 31, 2020 – Concordia University, Mequon

[www.lrcacchildabuseconference.com/](http://www.lrcacchildabuseconference.com/)

## **17<sup>th</sup> Annual Helen Kelly Forensic Nursing Conference**

May 4-6, 2020 – Blue Harbor Resort, Sheboygan [www.wiforensicnurses.org](http://www.wiforensicnurses.org)

## **WCASA Training Institute**

May 20-21, 2020 – Madison Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club, Madison

[www.wcasa.org](http://www.wcasa.org)



# Chapter Update

Established in 2004, the Wisconsin Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses (WI-IAFN) provides support to forensic nurses practicing in Wisconsin. We work to uphold the mission of the IAFN and provide opportunities for growth in forensic nursing.

We recently held our elections for our Board of Directors for 2020. Election results are in and we are excited for a new year of leadership! See our webpage to learn more about our board, among a wealth of other information. Our webpage is regularly updated and where you will find a list of forensic nurse programs across the state, resources for forensic nursing, upcoming meetings/educational opportunities and protocols to guide your practice.

We hold WI-IAFN meetings quarterly and they are free to attend. The exception is our spring meeting, held in conjunction with our annual Helen Kelly Conference. We rotate meeting sites throughout the state to provide greater accessibility to all of our Wisconsin forensic nurses. Meetings are educational, aimed at topics we see in practice, such as mimics of abuse, cultural competencies, and drug-endangered children, among others. We welcome and encourage participation from other forensic disciplines, nurses interested in learning more about our field and our forensic nursing colleagues across the state lines. We are an inclusive group, always looking for ways to better collaborate in our practice. Going forward in 2020, we hope to provide quarterly meetings via a tele-conference platform for those unable to attend in person. See the Upcoming Events section for dates!

Check us out at [www.wiforensicnurses.org](http://www.wiforensicnurses.org) or email at [WisconsinIAFN@gmail.com](mailto:WisconsinIAFN@gmail.com)