



ForensicNurses.org

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About IAFN

The International Association of Forensic Nurses is an international professional organization comprised of 3400 forensic nurses and other professionals around the world who support and compliment the work of forensic nursing. The [IAFN Mission](#) is to provide leadership in forensic nursing practice by developing, promoting, and disseminating information internationally about forensic nursing science.

What is a Forensic Nurse?

A forensic nurse provides specialized care for patients who are victims and/or perpetrators of trauma (both intentional and unintentional). The specialized role of forensic nurses goes far beyond medical care; forensic nurses also have a specialized knowledge of the legal system and skills in injury identification, evaluation and documentation. After attending to a patient's immediate medical needs, a forensic nurse often collects evidence, provides medical testimony in court, and consults with legal authorities.

History

In 1992, 72 registered nurses—mostly sexual assault nurse examiners—came together to form the International Association of Forensic Nurses. This founding group envisioned an organization that would encompass the depth and breadth of those who practice nursing where the healthcare system and the legal system intersect. Nurses who apply concepts, strategies, and interventions to victims of violent crime and perpetrators of criminal acts fall within this dynamic field of practice. This includes nurses in roles as diverse as death investigators, correctional nurse specialists, forensic psychiatric nurses, legal nurse consultants, forensic geriatric specialists, nurse attorneys, forensic clinical nurse specialists, forensic gynecology nurses, and those who work in other settings as forensic practice evolves.

Violence as a Healthcare Issue

In 1985, the U.S. Surgeon General identified violence as a healthcare issue and healthcare providers as key agents in ameliorating the effects of violence in our communities. The health consequences of violence have become one of the most pressing problems in health and safety, and require a multidisciplinary approach. Today, forensic nurses are recognized as a previously untapped resource in anti-violence strategies and as a critical link in the administration of justice.

Standards and Education

The Association has developed standards, including the *Forensic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, as well as various Education Guidelines, such as the *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Education Guidelines* (adult/adolescent and pediatric). The Association seeks to advance forensic nursing practice and incorporate forensic nursing science into basic and graduate nursing programs in colleges and universities around the globe. In 2002, we began offering the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Adult/Adolescent certification (SANE-A) and in 2006, began offering the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Pediatric (SANE-P) certification. In both certifications, candidates sit for a written exam. In addition, in collaboration with the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the Association offers a certification via portfolio in Advanced Forensic Nursing (AFN-BC).

Public Policy Agenda

- Support funding of the Violence Against Women Act
- Improve Coverage and Reimbursement for Forensic Nursing Services under Medicare and Medicaid
- Support Federal Legislation that Addresses Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan
- Increase the Supply of Forensic Nurses in the United States and Internationally
- Monitor and Comment on Health Care Reform Developments that Impact Forensic Nurses and Their Patients