

Since 2001 to this date our Sexual Assault Forensic Nurse Examiner Team, primarily serving Ada County, has been called out for:

1592 reported sexual assaults; of this total – **1274** had a forensic exam and **318** elected not to have evidence collected.

This is a community team with nurses from both Saint Alphonsus and St. Luke's hospitals. We respond and care for victims at any of our community's four Emergency Departments and our FACES Family Justice Center. Our team of Registered Nurses have all received specialized training to complete forensic exams. Each forensic exam last about 2.5 hours for a victim and about 4 hours for the nurse. The time difference is needed for drying the kit, extensive documentation, maintaining chain of evidence and care of photographs.

A forensic exam consists of a forensic interview, consents for the exam and treatment, a comprehensive head to toe assessment of the victim, a blood draw, alternative light source (ALS) inspection, documentation and photographs of any injuries, and a detailed genital assessment, including photography. Collection of evidence includes swabs collected from the mouth, external genital area, vaginal, rectal, and other places indicated in the interview or by identification by ALS. We administer medications for pregnancy prevention, and prevention of common STI's such as Gonorrhea and Chlamydia and provide referrals as needed for F/U care, HIV testing, counseling, etc.

Our victims are technically supposed to be between ages 14 to geriatric. In actuality we have cared for victims from age 12 – 87 years of age. We take care of all gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Victims show emotion during this process in many ways: crying, stoic, angrily, or emotionless. There is no end to reactions we may see. Some patients have a very hard time getting through the exam process. Increased tears are common, some are trembling and shaking especially during the genital exam. Some are terrified of needles and have a difficult time during the blood draw and injection. This is a time of crisis for the victims. They have lost control and we are trying to restore this by giving them the power and control of choice. Each sexual assault kit is representative of a victim and their desire for justice.

Thank you.

Cynthia Cook, RN, SANE-A

SAFE Coordinator