# Forensic Nursing 2020 IMPACT REPORT



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### FORENSIC NURSING MISSION

For nearly 200 years, the mission of Bon Secours has been to bring compassion to health care and to be Good Help to Those in Need<sup>®</sup>. The Bon Secours Richmond Forensic Nursing Program is an important part of this mission to serve our community, and has been a critical resource for victims of abuse for 28 years. Forensic nurses provide community outreach through a variety of ways, including participation in multiple sexual assault and child abuse response teams, as well as community lectures and presentations on sexual assault, human trafficking, strangulation, child abuse, elder abuse and interpersonal violence. This Bon Secours program is one of only a few across Virginia to be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, serving patients of all ages. These 24 forensic staff members are leaders in their field, serving 37 jurisdictions, partnering with law enforcement, attorneys, child advocacy centers, shelters, social services, victim witness and many others with the goal of identifying and assisting victims of violence. Their patients receive compassionate medical-forensic care and are provided with resources to obtain justice and see hope for the future.

# Strangulation Training

One in four women will experience intimate partner violence in her lifetime. Of women who encounter intimate partner violence, between 68% to 80% of high-risk survivors



will experience non-fatal strangulation by their partner — often multiple times and to the point of loss of consciousness. Strangulation is an ultimate form of power and control which can have a devastating psychological effect on victims who survive the attack. Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of violence a forensic nurse may see.

The Bon Secours Forensic Nursing Program in partnership with the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention hosted an advanced strangulation training in March 2021. Funds obtained through community donors were utilized to help provide scholarships to 61% of the 129 participants. Participants included community members from across the state of Virginia as well as from Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio. The training provided education to attorneys, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and victim services from 56 different agencies.

## **BY THE NUMBERS 2020**

2445 TOTAL PATIENTS



1032 consults

## 4% DECREASE FROM 2019

Decrease in numbers for March and April 2020, increase every month from July to Dec. with a **30%** increase in Oct. 2020

# PERKS (Physical Evidence Recovery Kits)

Reported to law enforcement Blind/Anonymous

## Strangulation

- 2020: 218 initial exams
  - 117 without evidence
  - 101 with evidence collection
  - 94 returned for follow-up

#### 2019: 169 initial exams

63 with evidence collected74 follow-up exams

# Human Trafficking

#### 2016-2020:

**164** human trafficking patients

Provided services for **64** patients in the shelter (some of these included in the 164 total)

2020: 25 human trafficking patients

2019: 26 human trafficking patients



# Kala's story

#### Kala, a 21-year-old female patient, went to the emergency department at Richmond Community Hospital with reports of Strangulation and Domestic/Intimate Partner

Violence. Kala had been to St. Mary's Hospital earlier in the month and was flagged by the staff as a potential Human Trafficking victim. However, when they attempted to contact her to follow up, the staff was not able to reach her at the number provided.

At Richmond Community Hospital, a Forensic Nurse named Amber and a Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP) Advocate named Sarah met Kala and proceeded to gather a history about the events leading up to her hospitalization, as well as a danger assessment and a forensic exam in which photos were taken of her injuries. From her conversation with Kala, Sarah became fairly certain that she was being sex trafficked by her intimate partner, Michael, and he had forced her to get his name tattooed on her neck. Mark also forced Kala to perform sexual favors for people she did not know and for which she did not give her consent. Kala met Michael through family friends and had known him for a long time, so she felt she could trust him; however, Michael threatened to hurt her family if she did not meet his demands. Because of the connection to her family and because he knew their names, where they lived and worked, and so many other personal things about them, he was successful in making her believe he could and would hurt her family. She felt she had nowhere to turn, as he seemed to know everyone that she knew. The threat Michael held over her caused Kala to be distrustful of Amber and Sarah.

Kala felt she had nowhere to go once she left the hospital. Kala even said "I will just go back to Michael or stay with a friend." Sarah knew these were not good options. Kala needed a shelter placement that night, and Sarah was able to make the appropriate arrangements for her. Sarah also helped coordinate transportation for Kala and worked with her to create a safety plan. Sarah has been in contact with the shelter staff. Kala's counselors report she is doing well, finally receiving the care she so desperately needed.



**Bon Secours** 



# Make a gift

To make a gift to support the Forensic Nursing program, visit **bsvaf.org/forensicnursing** or mail gifts to: 5008 Monument Avenue, 2nd Floor, Richmond, VA 23230

or contact **Angie Dempsey** at angie\_dempsey@bshsi.org or 804-514-5440



BON SECOURS FORENSIC NURSING SERVICES 5801 Bremo Road, Richmond, VA 23226 NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER: 804-281-8574

St. Mary's Hospital *(forensic office location)* Memorial Regional Medical Center Rappahannock General Hospital Richmond Community Hospital Short Pump Emergency Center St. Francis Medical Center Southside Emergency Care Center Southside Medical Center Southern Virginia Medical Center Westchester Emergency Center

**EMERGENCY NUMBER: 804-281-8184** Ask for the forensic nurse

# Wine Women & Shoes our annual fundraiser

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Wine Women & Shoes was our first virtual event. Anthony Antoine from NBC12 was the emcee. Gina bravely shared her story of being strangled as she was severely beaten by her husband. Fortunately, she made her way to Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital where a forensic nurse collected evidence, including over 200 photographs of her injuries. They then worked with the prosecuting attorney and testified to their findings in court. To see the video shown during the 2020 event, visit our website listed below. The 2020 event offered lots of fun, too, with both a silent and premiere auction, the Key to the Closet raffle for a Closet Factory closet filled with goodies totaling over \$10,000, as well as the Wall of Wine and Fun Wagon raffles and the Best Dressed and Best In Shoe contests. We were sad not to be together in-person, but through watch parties and social media, we felt the strength of working together to raise funds for such an important cause.

Wine Women & Shoes 2020 raised funds to support the forensic nursing team, including the Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program team (HVIP) and the patients and families they serve. The money contributed to the funding of a renovation project, which will relocate and expand the forensic nursing office suite. The new space will more than triple the square footage to better serve their patients and to allow better collaboration with their partners, such as law enforcement. In the renovated space, the suite will house two exam rooms and two waiting rooms, allowing the team to see two patients at the same time and provide privacy for both patients and members of their support systems. One of the exam rooms will be pediatric-friendly, as almost 50% of our patients are children. A conference/training room

are children. A conference/training room will provide adequate space for meetings and trainings. Additionally, a wonderful resiliency room will provide a space where the staff can take a break, eat a meal, or relax in a massage chair. The renovation began early in 2021 and the suite is scheduled to open mid-summer 2021 – in large part due to donations made and funds raised at Wine Women & Shoes 2019 and 2020!

For more information, visit winewomenandshoes.com/richmond

#### IN 2020 WE RAISED: **\$68,000!**

SAVE THE DATE: **10/24/21**