

FORENSIC NURSING IMPACT REPORT



2018

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®. 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 26 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 15 forensic staff members with 10 being full-time nurses, are leaders in their field, serving 42 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. Their patients receive compassionate medical-forensic care, and are provided with resources to obtain justice and see hope for the future.

The True Dangers of STRANGULATION

Strangulation displays control – having power over the victim's next breath. TV and movies often depict victims with bruising around the neck, but many of the signs are unnoticed to the untrained eye. They can include:

- A sore throat or hoarseness
- Discoloration in the eyes and of the tongue
- Memory loss
- Ringing in the ears

Research shows that once a victim has been strangled, even with non-life-threatening injuries, their chances of being a victim of homicide greatly increases. Death can occur within minutes due to strangulation.

We are here to help. Call us.

6 new
Virginia counties,
cities and towns
served this year



252
Community
commitment
hours

147
Requests to provide
critical expert
testimony in courts
across Virginia





2,450 *Total Cases & Consults*

Cases: 790 adults and 516 children

134
Victims of Human Trafficking
(2015-2018)

169
Patients Reporting Strangulation

45%
sexual
abuse

55%
physical
abuse

61 patients received
evidence collection

251 *Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (PERK)*
reported to law enforcement

27 blind or anonymous PERKs
(the collection and storing of
evidence until the patient proceeds
with a full report to police)



Rachelle's Story

She would've called 911 herself, but her boyfriend of four years had broken her phone in his violent attack that night. The neighbors who heard the screaming and banging made the call, no doubt saving her life. Rachelle* was only 21; she was in a relationship that had become manipulative, controlling and violent. She arrived at the Bon Secours emergency room, transported by EMS. Immediately, emergency staff recognized the need for a forensic nurse and community advocate. The forensic nursing team gave Rachelle space and time, but it didn't take long for her to tell her story. A compassionate listening ear may be what she needed most. The verbal abuse started early in the relationship, and then the physical abuse began. One of the most unnerving parts of her story was when she shared that she had been choked several times

before in the relationship. Through a specialized strangulation assessment, it was clear, strangulation, one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence, took place only hours earlier. In the midst of the physical exams, the community advocate arranged a shelter for her at the time of discharge.

The forensic nursing team and the community advocate followed-up after several days. The physical wounds seem to fade away so much quicker than the emotional ones. The evidence collected that early morning in the hospital, especially the specialized strangulation assessment results, will improve the quality of the criminal investigation, and the resources provided to Rachelle will help her in her plans for housing and feeling safe again.

**Name changed to protect the victim*



Congratulations to Bonnie Price

We wish there wasn't a need for it, but what Bonnie Price and her team do each day is critical to those in their care. Bonnie, director of forensic nursing and human trafficking initiatives at Bon Secours, is leading the charge in changing the landscape of how rape and abuse victims in Central Virginia receive care and find justice. She was one of the nurses who recognized the need for a specialized forensic nursing program more than 25 years ago.



On April 27th, Bonnie was recognized at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in front of a sold-out crowd as the 2018 honoree of the YWCA

Outstanding Women Award in the category of health and science. Those who work with Bonnie see her passion and drive in all she does to advocate for victims of any type of abuse. This recognition is truly deserved.

Wine Women & Shoes Our annual fundraiser

The 2018 event raised funds to support the forensic nursing team and the vulnerable patients they serve. The money allowed purchases of additional and up-to-date equipment, nurses to obtain additional knowledge from conferences, seminars, and other specialized trainings, and funding for an expanded and enhanced forensic nursing unit. Wine Women & Shoes 2018 raised:

\$88,000!

Save the Date! October 27, 2019



Bon Secours Forensic Nursing Services
5801 Bremon Road, Richmond, VA 23226



Non-Emergency Number: 804-281-8574
St. Mary's Hospital Emergency Department
Emergency Number: 804-281-8184 - ask for the forensic nurse



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

