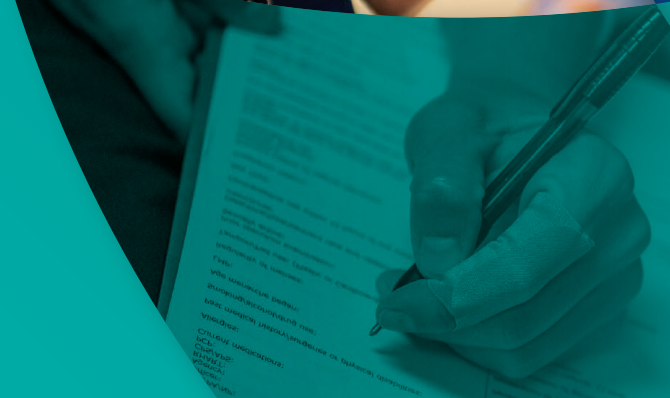


Forensic Nursing

2019 IMPACT REPORT



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 27 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 20 forensic staff members, 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 of violence. 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 the ultimate control - having power over a person's next breath. TV and movies often depict victims with bruising around the neck, but only about 50% of strangulation victims have visible injuries. Many of the signs go unnoticed to the untrained eye. They can include:

- A sore throat or hoarseness
- Broken blood vessels in and around the eyes
- 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.



Forensic Nursing

BY THE NUMBERS 2019



2562 total cases and consults



Cases: **870** adults, **572** children, **47%** sexual assault, **53%** physical assault



169 strangulation exams, **63** with evidence collection



291 PERKs (Physical Evidence Recovery Kits) collected, **58** Blind PERKs, which is a 114% increase in blind PERKs (8 total or 14% of the blind kit changed to reporting to law enforcement)



26 Human Trafficking patients in 2019 - Total 2015-2019 - **164**



Community Commitment Hours: **244**



Request for expert witness testimony: **155**



Cases BY JURISDICTION



Michelle's story

Michelle never imagined she would find herself in this situation. She was an active athlete, involved in the community, and proud to volunteer as an advocate at a local hospital. She loved life and was excited about the future. Today was special, as it was her birthday.

Three friends joined Michelle out on the town for her celebration. They enjoyed their time together, sharing stories as they caught up with each other. Michelle noticed Nathan was at the bar. Nathan and Michelle broke up several years ago after a very rocky relationship. They causally smiled at each other and as the night progressed began to talk.

Later in the evening Michelle noticed her friends had gone home. Nathan offered to take her home. On the way to the car, while in the restaurant parking lot, Michelle saw a side of Nathan she had not previously seen; out of the blue he became angry and began yelling at Michelle. The last thing she remembered was Nathan putting both of his hands around her neck and lifting her up against the car. Michelle thought she was going to die. Her birthday celebration had become her worst nightmare. She never imagined she would be the victim of a strangulation.

When Michelle came to, she was lying next to her car. She was dizzy, nauseated, and crying in pain. She was thinking, "How could someone I used to love do this to me?" Michelle's pain became severe and she started to have flashbacks of what had happened, including being sexually assaulted by Nathan. She realized she had to get to the hospital. Michelle started screaming for help.

A police officer arrived and took Michelle to a local hospital. Michelle asked to be seen by the forensic nurse to have evidence collected. Michelle was told they didn't offer that service and to go to Hospital X. Michelle followed their directions but was told at Hospital X they did not offer the service either. She started to feel defeated. She was tired, scared, and wanted to go home; however, her training made her continue to search for a forensic nurse.

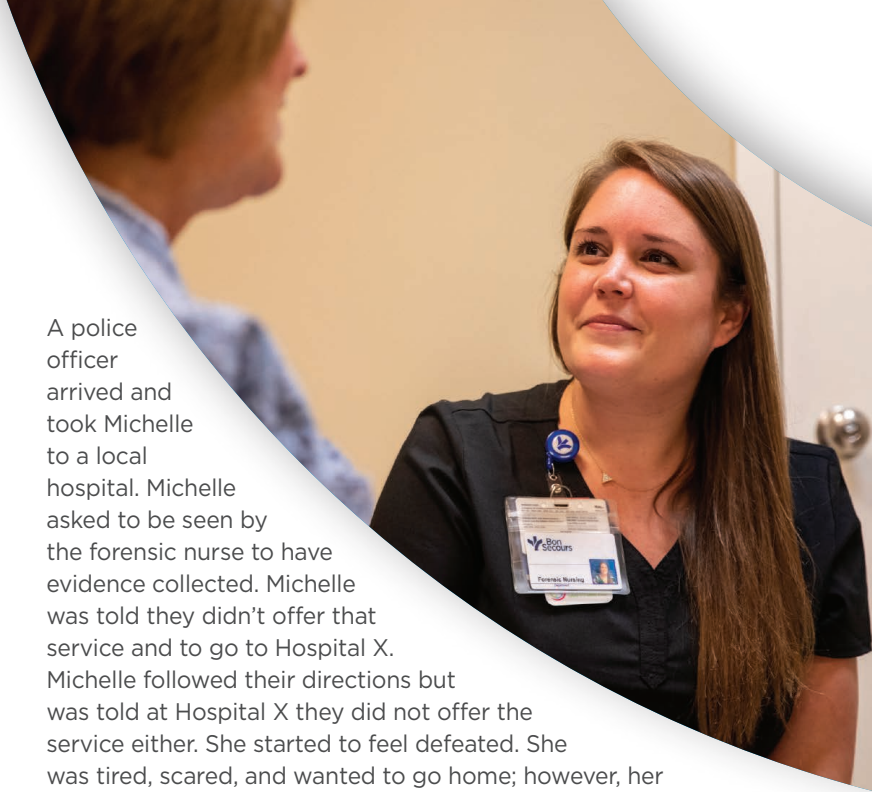
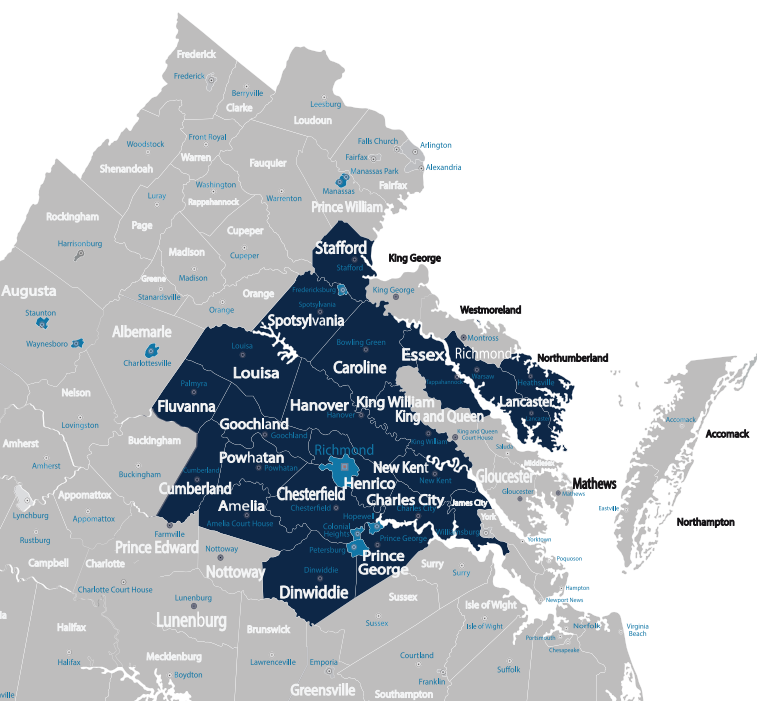
When Michelle arrived at Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital, she was greeted by a registration clerk who quickly escorted her to a private area. Very shortly after her arrival she met Lynn, a forensic nurse. Lynn immediately made her feel safe, reassuring her that she had choices and control over the situation. She explained Michelle's options for reporting to the police, as well as her medical treatment options.

Lynn took Michelle to the forensic nursing suite. Michelle immediately experienced a feeling of calm and privacy. The suite allowed Michelle a peaceful, quiet environment to complete the rest of her exam.

Throughout the exam Michelle felt supported. Each step and process were explained to her. When the exam was complete, Lynn spent time with Michelle going over her discharge instructions and reassuring her she was going to be ok.

Although her ordeal was far from over, the forensic nursing team met her medical needs and collected the necessary evidence. She felt as that she was in control of her story and the treatment. She felt like someone believed her.

Lynn, the forensic nurse, provided exceptional care, employing the trauma informed training she recently received. She knew it was important for the patient to feel safe, have choices and feel empowered. She was grateful to be part of a team of well-trained forensic professionals who have the tools and appropriate space to examine patients like Michelle. She was glad Michelle did not give up and eventually made her way to the Bon Secours Forensic Nursing Team.



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

Visit the Emergency Department at any of the following Bon Secours facilities and ask for the forensic nurse:

- St. Mary's Hospital
- St. Francis Medical Center
- Memorial Regional Medical Center
- Richmond Community Hospital
- Westchester Emergency Center
- Short Pump Emergency Center

EMERGENCY NUMBER: 804-281-8184

Ask for the forensic nurse



Wine Women & Shoes

OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

The 2019 event raised funds to support the forensic nursing team and the patients and families they serve. Contributions are being used to fund the relocation and renovation of the forensic nursing suite. This new space will expand square footage to better serve our patients and families in a private and supportive area. The renovated space will house two exam rooms, waiting areas and private restrooms.

One of the exam rooms will be pediatric friendly, as almost 50% of our patients are children. A conference room will provide adequate space for meeting and training. Additionally, a wonderful staff resiliency room where the staff can take a break, eat a meal, or relax in a massage chair. The renovated office suite is scheduled to open Spring 2021 - in large part due to donations made and funds raised at Wine Women & Shoes 2019!

IN 2019
WE RAISED:
\$124,000!

SAVE
THE DATE:
10/25/20

For more information, visit
winewomenandshoes.com/richmond