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OSF HealthCare hosts SANE nurse training

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(PEORIA, Ill. | Oct. 5, 2023) – OSF HealthCare, in partnership with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, hosted a SANE (Sexual Assault Nursing Examiner) nurse training Oct. 3-5 at the OSF HealthCare Ministry Headquarters in downtown Peoria, Illinois.

Nearly 75 nurses from across the state of Illinois were provided the in-seat portion for adult/adolescent SANE training in order to become qualified to care for and treat survivors of sexual assault.

“To make sure that we have enough qualified medical providers across the state, the Illinois Attorney General’s Office provides SANE training in collaboration with health systems. OSF HealthCare has been very proactive in making it clear that we would like to host training and work with the Attorney General’s Office to give as many nurses as possible that are interested the opportunity to get the training,” explains Layne Steffen, program manager of nursing quality and safety and the SANE program for OSF HealthCare.

The Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act (SASETA) is an Illinois law that requires hospitals to develop a treatment plan or transfer agreement with a treatment hospital. SASETA also establishes a statewide forensic evidence collection system and creates a reimbursement program for the cost of care and evidence collection for victims who are not covered by private insurance or Medicaid. The law also requires victims to be treated by a qualified medical provider, such as a SANE nurse, who will undergo months of training to become a qualified SANE.

SANE nurses can be trained specifically for pediatrics/adolescents, adult/adolescents, or both. Separate training courses are required to be qualified in both.

“SANE nursing is vitally important to understanding all the dynamics of what has happened to people after sexual abuse and sexual assault. SANE training gets into the neurobiology of trauma as well as some of the forensic elements of collecting important evidence that may be useful in later criminal proceedings,” Steffen says.

Steffen says the in-seat SANE training isn’t the end of training for nurses, but more of a steppingstone during a months-long journey.

“Before the in-seat training, there’s about 16 hours of online pre-work to learn about forensic nursing, some of the basics of anatomy and some of the basics of the neurobiology of trauma,” Steffen says. “The in-seat training gets much more into the details of the holistic care that’s required for the patient.”

Steffen says that in order to be considered a qualified medical provider by the State of Illinois, it can take anywhere from four to 12 months to complete all elements of training which includes involvement in medical forensic exams with sexual assault survivors.

Sarah Vance is the SANE coordinator for OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center. She says it’s critical for medical providers to be knowledgeable in what patients are going through.

"It's important to be able to have someone who truly understands trauma-informed care and be able to have that knowledge to complete a medical forensic exam for someone who has gone through one of the most traumatic events in their entire life," Vance says.

Vance is certified in providing pediatric and adult SANE care and is one of only 555 people worldwide to hold dual certifications.

"After working as a qualified SANE for either 300 hours or three years, you are then eligible to take a national certification through the IAFN (International Association of Forensic Nursing). That is a board-certified test, which means once you've passed, you're considered an expert in the field," Vance says.

Vance admits this line of work can be very tough, but the reward of providing potentially lifesaving care to patients helps get her through the dark days.

"For me personally, it's knowing that the care I give somebody will be remembered for the rest of their life. I've completed many kits throughout my career, and many times as I'm walking a patient out the door, I receive a hug from them," Vance says. "They tell me this is the worst thing that has ever happened to them, but my interaction with them made it so much better and they thank me for it. For me, I know it's the start of their healing and that's what keeps me going."

OSF Saint Francis Medical Center is equipped to complete medical forensic exams for both children and adults who have experienced sexual assault.

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OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare has 16 hospitals – 10 acute care, five critical access, one transitional care - with 2,131 licensed beds throughout Illinois and Michigan. OSF employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners across 150+ locations; has two colleges of nursing; operates OSF Home Care Services, an extensive network of home health and hospice services; owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. In 2020, OSF OnCall was established, a digital health operating unit, including a hospital-at-home. OSF OnCall delivers care and services when, where and how patients prefer to receive them. OSF HealthCare has been recognized by *Fortune* as one of the most innovative companies in the country. More at osfhealthcare.org/.