

## **Forensic Nurse Examiner Task Force Releases SAFE Designation to support sexual assault victims**

**(March 28, 2022) Columbia, SC** – The South Carolina Forensic Nurse Examiners Task Force, led by the South Carolina Victims Assistance Network (SCVAN), joined Attorney General Alan Wilson today to release the state’s new Sexual Assault Forensic Excellence (SAFE) Designation System. The SAFE Designation System is an accreditation program for hospitals, communities, and other agencies that support victims of sexual assault. Members of the Task Force gathered to announce the new program and highlight its significance in relation to investigating, prosecuting, and responding to crimes involving sexual assault.

“As a member of the FNE Task Force, my office recognizes the significance of forensic exams in evidence collection,” Attorney General Wilson said. “These exams can help build a case against sexual assault perpetrators and enable prosecutors to hold the defendants accountable for their actions.”

To be eligible for the SAFE designation, hospitals will need to assign a contact person to oversee the sexual assault kit tracking system. Additionally, accreditation levels will require field personnel to complete a 2-hour training on caring for sexual assault victims. To assist hospitals in obtaining SAFE designation, SCVAN will provide free Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Adult/Adolescent Didactic training statewide from April 2022 through December 2022.

“We hope that all hospitals will step up and achieve this safe designation in response to the needs of sexual assault victims across South Carolina,” said Ritchie Tidwell, Chair of the FNE Task Force.

The SAFE Designation System will officially launch on April 1, 2022. To access more information about applying for designation, please visit [www.scvan.org](http://www.scvan.org). If there are questions, please contact SCVAN’s Amanda Brown, Statewide Forensic Nurse Examiner Program Coordinator at [amandabrown@scvan.org](mailto:amandabrown@scvan.org) or Sabrina Gast, Statewide Forensic Nurse Examiner Director at [sabrina@scvan.org](mailto:sabrina@scvan.org).

To report an incident or seek victim services, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **800-656-4673**. The Hotline is confidential and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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