



INTERNATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
**Forensic  
Nurses**

**FOUNDATION**

For release: June 3, 2025

## **Forensic Nursing Organization to Launch Teleconnect Center to Expand Access to Forensic Nursing Care**

*International Association of Forensic Nurses Foundation Announces  
Hub-and-Spoke Initiative*

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) Foundation, the charitable arm of the IAFN, today announced plans to establish the Forensic Nursing Teleconnect Center, part of the Forensic Nursing Access Initiative that aims to increase access to specialized forensic nursing care for patients who have experienced violence, particularly in underserved areas.

The project, made possible through generous support from the Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation, will use telehealth technology to connect healthcare providers treating patients who have experienced violence with expertly trained forensic nurse examiners, regardless of geographic location.

Forensic nurses provide specialized, trauma-informed care for victims of violence, including sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and other forms of trauma at the intersection of the healthcare and justice systems. They deliver comprehensive care that also may include evidence collection, preserving crucial forensic evidence for legal proceedings. The Teleconnect Center represents a significant step toward ensuring all survivors have access to trauma-informed, evidence-based care regardless of where they seek care.

"Launching the Forensic Nursing Teleconnect Center is a bold, innovative step toward changing the future for individuals who experience violence by giving them access to gold-standard nursing care," said IAFN Foundation President Karin Wickwire. "Violence is a global public health crisis, and victims deserve access to high-quality healthcare in the aftermath of violence. We are committed to giving patients the forensic nursing care they deserve."

The center will offer provider-to-provider services, connecting healthcare providers via telehealth following a hub-and-spoke model. The IAFN Foundation's Forensic Nursing Teleconnect Center will serve as a national hub site capable of providing forensic nursing telehealth services across state lines to providers who do not have specialized training.

Telehealth is a promising strategy to help increase access to forensic nursing care, but access to it remains limited. The IAFN Foundation will draw from IAFN's extensive experience establishing best practices for forensic nursing telehealth to create the national hub for forensic nursing telehealth services. Based on IAFN member data from U.S. forensic nursing programs, there are only approximately 40 forensic nursing telehealth hub sites across the country. The majority of them are state-based hubs that work only with spoke sites within the same state.

[fundforensicnursing.org](https://fundforensicnursing.org)

“The use of telehealth will remove barriers patients face to receiving specialized care and will significantly increase access to care for patients in rural or underserved communities that currently have no access to this care,” explained IAFN Foundation CEO Jennifer Pierce-Weeks. “Our ultimate goal is to scale the hub-and-spoke model to meet the healthcare needs of violence survivors in the US and globally.”

During the three-year project, the Forensic Nursing Teleconnect Center will transform access to specialized care. The initiative begins with strategic staff recruitment and partnerships with three U.S. pilot sites to implement this innovative telehealthcare model. Connecting patients with dedicated victim advocates, who inform them about their rights, options, and available resources, is central to the center’s mission of providing comprehensive support.

The initial phase of the healthcare-focused Forensic Nursing Teleconnect Center is funded by a grant from the Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation and is a critical element of the family foundation's broader efforts to increase access to healthcare for victims of sexual violence. “Our vision and purpose in funding the IAFN project stems from the firm belief that all victims and survivors of sexual assault have the right to the highest quality specialty care and judicial outcomes regardless of where they live,” said Marci Matthews, Executive Director of the foundation. “The Forensic Nursing Access Initiative provides a foundation that I believe will dismantle barriers and ensure everyone has access to specially-trained nurses in pediatrics, adolescents, and adults. I anticipate the work to result in increased access to specialty care, new levels of consistency and quality in evidence collection, broader acceptance of telehealth's effectiveness and much more, both in the U.S. and globally,” added Matthews, who is a sexual assault survivor, philanthropist, former crisis hotline specialist, and hospital-based patient advocate. Violence inflicts profound and enduring trauma on both individuals and communities. Comprehensive research confirms that victims who receive specialized forensic nursing care can reduce the negative health outcomes as well as the cost of care. Despite this evidence, forensic nursing services remain severely limited in healthcare systems worldwide.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) represent the most extensively researched and recognized forensic nursing specialty. In the United States, however, only approximately 25% of hospitals have staff SANEs equipped to deliver comprehensive care to sexual abuse survivors. Forensic nursing services can reduce the negative health outcomes of violence and the cost of care.

The health consequences of violence and trauma are both severe and far-reaching, potentially including: acute physical injuries; severe and permanent disabilities; sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV; unwanted pregnancies; psychological trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression; and elevated risks for chronic non-communicable conditions such as cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Expanding access to forensic nursing represents a critical opportunity to improve outcomes for survivors while strengthening community response systems to violence.

The IAFN Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization and the charitable arm of the International Association of Forensic Nurses. Together, the two organizations work toward the shared vision of a world where all patients have access to forensic nursing care. For more information, visit [fundforensicnursing.org](http://fundforensicnursing.org).

Contact:  
Cindy Wolkovich  
[cwolkovich@iafn.org](mailto:cwolkovich@iafn.org)  
410.626.7805 x132

