



## Illinois Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (IL SANE) Program

### What is a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)?

A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is a registered nurse who has been specially trained to provide comprehensive care to sexual assault patients in a medical setting. SANEs are highly skilled in conducting forensic examinations. For a sexual assault patient, a forensic examination is a head to toe physical exam identifying all signs of trauma, including the completion of the Illinois State Police Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit. Additionally, SANEs can testify as an expert witness in a criminal trial.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners provide survivors with prompt, compassionate care while preserving dignity and reducing psychological trauma. SANEs are integral participants in Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART). A SART is a multidisciplinary group of professionals, including SANEs, sexual assault advocates, police, and prosecutors, who work together to care for the survivor and hold the offender accountable in the criminal justice system.

### What is the mission of the IL SANE program?

The mission of the Illinois Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (IL SANE) Program is to increase the number of SANEs working in Illinois by providing high quality, consistent education, and support for registered nurses and other professionals serving sexual assault survivors. By educating nurses, police, prosecutors, advocates, and others, survivors of sexual assault will be ensured of receiving quality patient care; full, fair, and accurate forensic evaluations; and a multidisciplinary approach that holds offenders accountable for these horrific crimes.

### How did this program develop in the State of Illinois?

The Illinois SANE program was developed by the Illinois Attorney General's Office, with assistance from the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and existing SANE programs, through a grant received from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

### Why become a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner?

Research shows that SANE programs:

- Reduce re-traumatization of the patients in the health care setting.
- Ensure that patients receive more compassionate and objective care.
- Increase the likelihood of survivors reporting the sexual assault to law enforcement.
- Improve the quality of the forensic evidence collection, which increases prosecution rates.
- Ensure that survivors receive quicker access to victim's services.
- Reduce cost of sexual assault to society.

### How long have there been SANE programs?

SANE programs began independent of each other in the late 1970s. The first three programs were in Minnesota, Tennessee, and Texas. In 1992, individual nurses from throughout the country came together and formed the International Association of Forensic Nurses ([www.iafn.org](http://www.iafn.org)).

### Who supports SANE programs?

- Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan;
- American College of Emergency Physicians;
- Emergency Nurses Association;
- American Nurses Association; and
- United States Department of Justice.

### **How do you become a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner in Illinois?**

To become a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner in Illinois, you must:

- Be a registered nurse;
- Complete a 40-hour didactic course;
- Complete the clinical component; and
- Optional to show expertise: Pass an examination offered by the International Association of Forensic Nurses for certification. Currently, there is no Illinois certification for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners.

### **Who is the Illinois Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Coordinator?**

Shannon Liew, RN, BSN, SANE-A is the SANE Coordinator for the State of Illinois. Prior to working as the Illinois SANE Coordinator, Shannon coordinated a community-wide, 24/7 response SANE Program in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for three years. During that time, she conducted Adult/Adolescent SANE Training, performed medical-forensic examinations and facilitated meetings with Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) partner agencies. She is an International Association of Forensic Nurses Certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner – Adult/Adolescent (SANE-A).

### **How do I get more information about the IL SANE Program?**

For additional information and resources, please contact:

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