

IAFN's Spotlight-on-a-Member



Eldonna Hilde

LOCATION: Statesboro, Georgia 30458 USA, Southeast Georgia

WORK SETTING: The Teal House

FORENSIC NURSING EXPERIENCE: 14 years

YEARS OF IAFN MEMBERSHIP: 10+ years

Tell us more about your forensic nursing role: As a women's health nurse practitioner since 1979, Ms. Hilde has heard numerous stories of what women experienced by being sexually assaulted either by an acquaintance or by a stranger. In her words, "No one deserves to be raped, and the consequences that occur after such a tragic and traumatic experience often carries life-long issues. I heard these stories and vowed that someday I would do something to give back to my community to help women who have been sexually assaulted because we had no resources available in our rural community to these people-male or female. Deep to my core as a nurse practitioner, I am a woman's advocate for women of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds to have a better fulfilling life. These patients need to have resources available to assist them with in releasing the demons of this trauma to prevent them from being trapped with their demons the rest of their life." Ms. Hilde stated: "Forensic nursing is providing care and compassion to a person who has just been acutely traumatized and her/his privacy invaded is challenging because everyone responds differently when exposed to this type of trauma. It is rewarding to see how your caring as a forensic nurse enlightens the patient that someone out here in this big bad world cares and is listening to me and truly believes me. Also, my grave concern is for those who have been sexually assaulted and have not come forward and have kept 'their secret of pain' tight inside their minds and bodies. This is why I keep going forward as a forensic nurse because all of these patients deserve to live a whole life, happy, secure and experience love and compassion without being violated and traumatized." Personal interests, hobbies, and family life. Ms. Hilde reported that she has "four beautiful grandchildren and they are the love of my life besides my husband and children. I love doing family things together with them which we do a lot, such as, water activities at the cabin at the lake, farm activities as we live on a little farm, four-wheeling trail rides, snow skiing, winter sports, playing table games, and my alone time of reading a historical novel or a religious book, knitting, and paper crafting which is scrapbooking and making cards.

Why did you become a forensic nurse or decide to work with forensic nurses? Eldonna led the way in the creation of the SRSAC. In 2007 she collaborated with community leaders to write bylaws and articles of incorporation to form an inaugural Board of Directors. Over the past ten yrs. Eldonna has tirelessly volunteered her time and services to acquire clinical space, equipment, and supplies for forensic examinations in a community-based setting (The Teal House) and to recruit RNs for training as SANEs, initially for adolescents and adults and later for pediatric victims. Up until October 2016, she has worked over 40 hours/wk in an unpaid position to manage and lead SANE services for three counties in SE GA. Eldonna collaborates with the SRSAC Executive Director, the Director of Sexual Assault Advocates, the SRSAC Medical Director, and the Statesboro Sexual Assault Response Team, which includes law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, prosecutors, and community leaders to increase quality comprehensive services to victims of sexual assault. She has built relationships with community leaders, Georgia Southern University officials and other institutions of higher education in the community to increase community awareness of sexual assaults among students and facilitate preventive services and victim services when college health services have discontinued such services. Eldonna is an excellent SANE leader who not only provides the majority of 24/7 SANE services in a compassionate and caring manner but organizes the SANE call schedule, develops the policies and procedures that guide the SANEs, and conducts monthly business/continuing education meetings to optimize evidence-based care. She works in close cooperation with the SRSAC medical director and the public health department to do a follow-up clinic for victims without a primary care provider that she staffs. Eldonna is an innovative nurse practitioner leader with a vision to expand The Teal House to provide the most comprehensive community-based services possible with limited resources.

