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In regards to the discussion about the need for SANE nurses in rural areas of the state, our department is in full support and agreement of a sexual assault response center for the State of Iowa. Having the availability of a SANE nurse is a huge priority for smaller communities like ours. More availability of training will always help smaller departments.

In 2020 our officers and I investigated a case of a sexual assault in our city. We transported the victim to the Madison County Hospital Emergency Department. We then learned that the hospital did not have anyone trained as a SANE nurse. The victim was advised that she could be taken to a Des Moines hospital for the exam. Due to other circumstances, she did not want to make the trip to Des Moines. She just wanted it all over with.

We fortunately obtained a conviction in that case, but had the case hinged heavily on a sexual assault exam, we would have lost the case, or not even have been able to file charges. After that case, we had some good discussions with hospital staff and they immediately sent two nurses to get certified as SANE nurses.

Eight months later we received a report of a sexual assault and were able to have the victim go to the Madison County Hospital for an exam by a SANE. This was a huge benefit in that because the victim didn't have to travel 45 minutes away, we had in-person access to the victim and family for any specific questions regarding evidence. It also helped the victim and family feel better knowing we were close.

Madison County Hospital now has three SANE nurses. We are fortunate to have them.

Captain Roger Shortt
Winterset Police Department