

Purpose

- Increase the number of sexual assault forensic nurses(SAFE) in the ED.
- Provide treatment at Mather for patients with chief complaint of sexual assault.
- Provide a SAFE class at Mather.

Significance

- NYS Public Health Law 2805-I states a patient has the right to be seen and examined in any ED as a sexual assault victim.
- Prior to this initiative, we discharged all sexual assault patients after the MSE and referred them to a designated SAFE center.
- We did not track if any of these patients ever had the forensic examination.

Framework

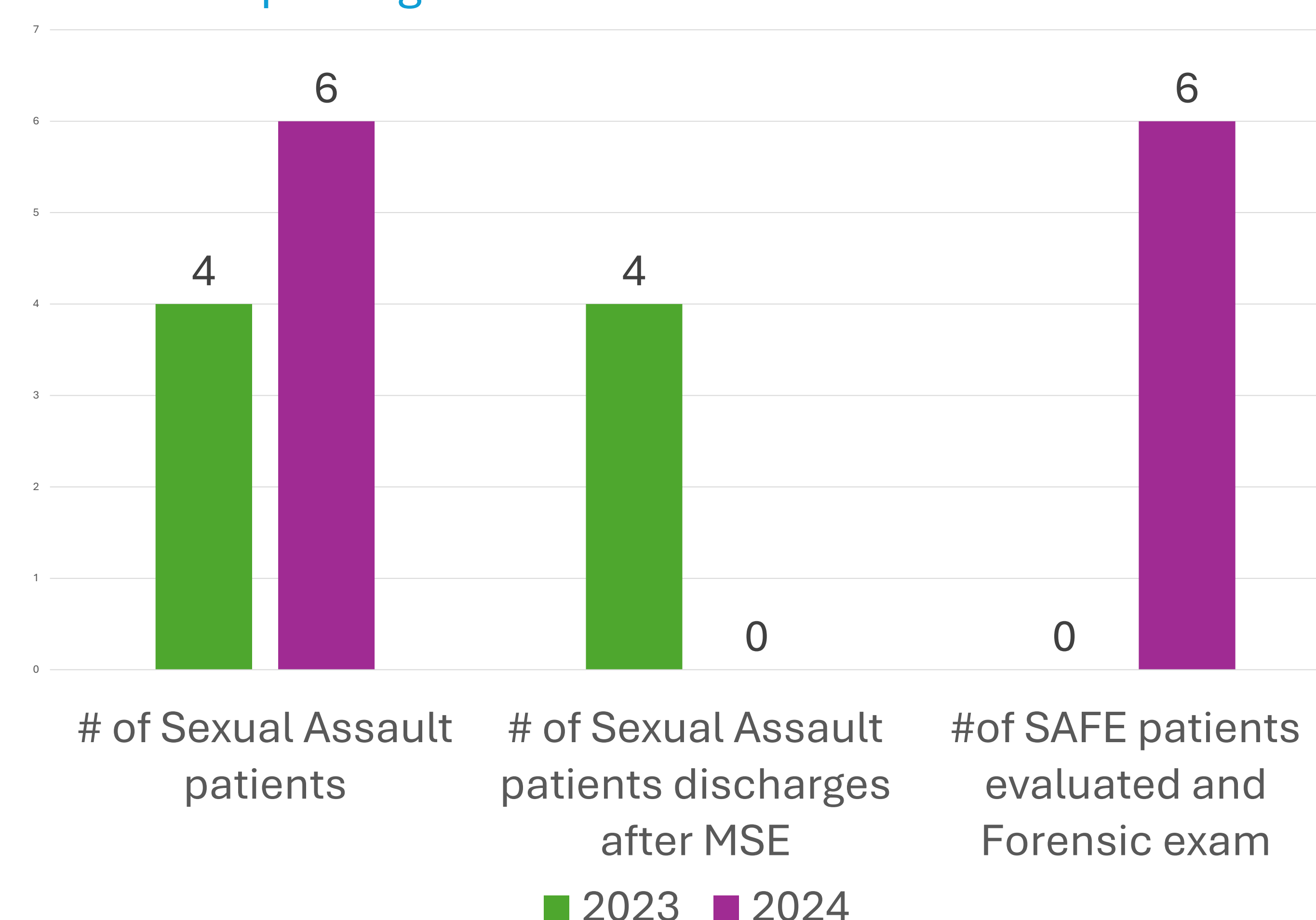
- We used a PDSA framework.
- Initial education comprised of a computer-based learning module and review of sexual assault kit with educator.
- RNs voiced concern about lack of expertise, and knowledge in relation to forensic nursing.
- Forensic nursing encompasses a multitude of skills, knowledge of examination, documentation, and legal knowledge.
- Educator contacted a SAFE instructor and with support of ED director and CNO – 4 nurses were approved and financial support provided to attend 40-hour SAFE course.
- Staff expressed increased confidence and competence after attending the class.

Setting

- Northwell Health Mather Hospital situated on North Shore Long Island, NY
- Magnet designated since 2013
- 41,200 ED visits
- Lantern designated since 2022

Number of Sexual Assault Patients 2023-2024

Improving Care for Victims of Sexual Assault



Outcomes

- Since January 2024, we have provided a SAFE examination to any victim of sexual assault presenting to the ED.
- To date, we have seen and treated 4 patients.
- In 2023, we discharged 5 patients to a SAFE Center.
- We do not know if they ever followed up and had a forensic examination.

Lessons Learned/Challenges

- Seventeen nurses have completed the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner certification class.
- We have a low volume of sexual assault patients and several of our nurses are now working with the Suffolk Crime Victims Bureau, this ensures that they become proficient in carrying out the exam.

Next Steps

- New ED scheduled to open in Late Spring 2025
- Plan to increase the numbers of nurses that have taken a SAFE class
- One of our RNs is holding a SAFE class in 2025
- Become a SAFE Center of Excellence

References

Chalmers, K., Hollender, M., Spurr, L., Parameswaran, R., Dussault, N., Farnan, J., Oyola, S., & Carter, K. (2023). Emergency department preparedness to care for sexual assault survivors: A nationwide study. *The Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 24(3), 629-636. <https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.59257>

Crime Victims Center. (2024) *Statistics-Rape*. <https://www.parentsformeganslaw.org/statistics-rape/>

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