



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
**Forensic
Nurses**

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Forensic Nursing Leaders Receive Prestigious International Awards

*International Association of Forensic Nurses honors five individuals
for exceptional contributions to forensic nursing and patient access*

August 20, 2025, ELKRIDGE, Md. — The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) honored five forensic nursing leaders with its 2025 awards for their exceptional work advancing the field of forensic nursing during individual ceremonies this summer throughout the country.

Presentations were held to honor: Samantha Mendez-Dominguez, MPH, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, who received the Association's highest award, the Virginia A. Lynch Pioneer Award in Forensic Nursing, at Honor Health in Scottsdale, Az.; Andrea Sebastian, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC/PC, AFN-C, SANE-P, DM-AFN, who received the Kim Day Service Award, and Lisa Beasley, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, AFN-C, who received the Distinguished Fellow Award, presented together at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis, Tenn.; Jessica Dick, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P who received the Front Line Forensic Nurse of the Year Award at the District of Columbia Forensic Nurse Examiners in Washington, D.C.; and Robert Foster, D.O., who received the Patron Award at Southwest Forensic Nursing & Healthcare in St. George, Utah.

"The nurses, educators and advocates we honor this year with our prestigious international awards reflect the very best of our profession. They are all professionally and personally devoted to providing trauma-informed care for patients at one of the most vulnerable and frightening moments of their lives," said Karin Wickwire, DNP, CRNP, IAFN President. "Together with thousands of fellow nursing, advocacy, and community partners, they provide critical components of the multidisciplinary work required to care for individuals as patients and advocate for them as victims."

Forensic nurses are registered nurses or advanced practice nurses who have received specialized education and training to address the acute and long-term health consequences and criminal justice needs of patients impacted by violence. A forensic nurse is often one of the first professionals to provide medical care to a victim of violence and is trained to coordinate the resources necessary to address both the medical needs of the individual, and if appropriate, the evidentiary needs of the victim for potential use in the criminal justice system.

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SAMANTHA MENDEZ-DOMINGUEZ

Mendez-Dominguez is Forensic Nurse Supervisor at Honor Health. She received the IAFN's highest honor in recognition of her leadership in forensic nursing, particularly her work advancing care for victims of violence and trauma, including human trafficking, her community partnership with criminal justice, and her the extension of her expertise to introduce a healthcare delegation from Ukraine to a comprehensive forensic nursing program. The award is named for Virginia Lynch, known globally as the "mother of forensic nursing." Mendez-Dominguez earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Arizona State University and a Master of Public Health from Arizona State University.

"Samantha's pioneering spirit and determination to improve patients' access to the highest quality forensic nursing care is a model for anyone who wants to make a deep difference in their community and in individual lives," Wickwire said. "When she became a forensic nurse, she dove into the work passionately to effect change locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Samantha's dedication to growing the specialty of forensic nursing made her the perfect recipient of our highest recognition."

ANDREA SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is Child Advocacy Resource and Evaluation Services Team Nurse Practitioner, University of Tennessee Le Bonheur Pediatric Specialists and Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, College of Nursing, both in Memphis. She received the Kim Day Service Award in recognition of her invaluable volunteer contributions to IAFN and forensic nursing. During her volunteer tenure as the IAFN Nominating Committee Chair, she helped steer the organization through a time of rapid growth and transition. Sebastian earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Eastern Kentucky University and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of Kentucky.

"Andrea has guided fellow IAFN member-volunteers through the challenge of a system change of our nomination process for annual elections, which is essential to our organization," Wickwire said. "Her patience, humility and willingness to take on whatever is needed over many years' service to our association reflect her passion for forensic nursing. Andrea's work is a testament to her commitment to ensuring that patients who need forensic nursing care receive the highest quality care they deserve."

LISA BEASLEY

Beasley is Director of the Center for Community and Global Partnerships and Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Population Health, at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Nursing. She was honored for her advancement of forensic nursing as a clinician and educator, with a dedication to ensuring safety and healing for vulnerable youth described by a colleague as "nothing short of inspiring." Beasley earned both her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Nursing from University of Memphis, Loewenberg School of Nursing, and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from University of Alabama, Capstone College of Nursing.

"Through her clinical, nurse educator, and rural health expertise, Lisa has become an invaluable source of knowledge and a model of excellence in forensic nursing," Wickwire said. "She exceeds standards of clinical excellence, particularly in her work young victims of violence in a rural area. Lisa's vast work as an educator and researcher, passionate participant in regional and statewide organizations, and her compassionate care for patients who experience violence embody our Distinguished Fellow Award."

JESSICA DICK

Dick is the Associate Director of Nursing and a Forensic Nurse Examiner at the District of Columbia Forensic Nurse Examiners. She was honored for her unwavering belief in the importance of high-quality, patient-centered care that upholds the dignity, autonomy, and emotional well-being of every individual she serves; her consistent delivery of that care; and for her fierce advocacy of her fellow forensic nurses. Dick earned her Associate of Science in Nursing from the University of Pittsburgh, her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Penn., and her Master of Science in Forensic Nursing from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.

"In Jessica's daily work, she embodies clinical excellence in forensic nursing," Wickwire said. She is fiercely dedicated to high-quality, patient-centered care as the foundation for each patient interaction. Caring for patients who are often marginalized, Jessica brings an incomparable lens of compassion to each individual to ensure they feel respected and dignified."

ROBERT FOSTER

Foster is the Medical Director of Southwest Forensic Nursing & Healthcare and received the Kim Day Service Award in recognition of his advocacy that has supported forensic nursing as a profession and measurably impacted the quality and availability of trauma-informed care for countless patients. Over nearly 20 years, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that patients who have experienced violence have access to compassionate, expert forensic care regardless of geography, funding, or institutional constraints; his commitment has included direct financial support. He earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, Calif. And completed an Emergency Medicine Residence at Michigan State University, Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, Mich.

"Dr. Foster's work over the past 10 years to support forensic nursing embodies the very best of our community partners we honor with our 2025 Patron Award," Wickwire said. "His dedication to advancing forensic nursing is reflected in his more than 10 years' action and advocacy. Dr. Foster has bridged gaps between forensic nurses and emergency room physicians and medical forensic examiners that are critical elements to the community's ability to respond effectively to the needs of patients who experience violence. His leadership and compassion have proven his unwavering belief in forensic nursing."

The International Association of Forensic Nurses is a professional organization of 6,000 nurses who provide specialized healthcare for patients impacted by violence. The Association establishes the standards of practice for forensic nursing; defines and advances the global research agenda to enhance forensic nursing's evidence-based response; develops, promotes, and disseminates information about forensic nursing science; and serves as a global network for forensic nurses to exchange ideas, serve as mentors, and enhance their practice. For more information, visit forensicnurses.org.

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