



# MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEM

## O F E A S T T E X A S

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### *Avoiding Sexual Assault Crimes Treating Sexual Assault Victims*

**LIVINGSTON, TEXAS (May 12, 2010)...** As more sexual assault convictions occur, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) at Memorial Medical Center - Livingston are providing information to protect community members and prevent these crimes. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey, a person is sexually assaulted every 2 minutes in the United States.

"Most times we think of a sexual predator as someone we don't know. We even focus on teaching our kids stranger danger," said Connie Blalock, RN and SANE Coordinator at Memorial. "In fact, eighty percent of perpetrators in sexual assault cases are by a close family friend or relative of the victim."

Sexual assault in children may go undetected until the child makes an outcry. An outcry is when a child shares their victimization story with another person. Many victims do not have physical trauma because the perpetrator doesn't want anyone to know. While building trust with the victim, SANE nurses accumulate any physical evidence along with the child's history recollection.

During an examination, a SANE will formulate diagnoses, plan of care and treatment specifically for that individual patient. The collection of information is shared with local law enforcement, District Attorney, SAAFE House, Child Protective Services and Childrenz Haven. Adults on the other hand can come to the hospital emergency department, receive treatment and the victim is not required to report the assault if so chooses.

"SANE nurses receive extensive, specialized training through the Office of the Attorney General. Many hours of class, clinical and courtroom training certify nurses on sexual

assault. Memorial currently has 4 certified SANE nurses and 4 more that have completed training and are working on the clinical portion,” stated Blalock.

Through generous donations and grants from the Peace Officers Association, SAAFE House, Memorial Medical Center – Livingston and others in the community, the hospital is constructing a SANE suite giving comfort and privacy to the victim. Technologically advanced equipment provides examiners with information that leads to more guilty pleas or convictions for the defendants. The program operates under the leadership of Dr. Ed Waechter, Obstetrician and Gynecologist and SANE Medical Director.

“In the past, many sexual assault victims have not received the proper examinations because they would have to drive out of the community to a location that has a SANE program,” said Blalock. “Memorial Medical Center – Livingston wants to make a difference in the lives of the women and children in Polk County and surrounding areas who may be experiencing or who will in the future experience sexual abuse.”

Ways to protect yourself and your children from sexual predators include:

- Talk to your children about abuse
- Listen to children and ask questions
- Trust your instincts
- Have a code word with friends to help you leave an uncomfortable situation
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Never leave beverages unattended
- Have a buddy system

Memorial Medical Center - Livingston encourages you to be safe. If you are a victim of a sexual assault crime, please seek medical attention.

### **About Memorial Health System of East Texas**

As the largest health care system in the deep East Texas area, Memorial Health System of East Texas is a private, not-for-profit hospital that provides care to almost a quarter of a million patients each year. Since its inception in 1949, Memorial Health System has paved the way for quality, innovative health care in East Texas. In fact, Memorial consistently ranks among the nation’s best for exceptional health care and patient satisfaction.

Memorial Health System of East Texas is comprised of four hospitals—Memorial Medical Center—Lufkin, Memorial Medical Center—Livingston, Memorial Medical Center—San Augustine, and Memorial Specialty Hospital, the only rural long-term acute care facility within the area. Memorial offers a wide array of services, including the newly renovated Arthur Temple, Sr. Regional Cancer Center, which has earned another three-year accreditation with commendation from the Commission on Cancer. Additionally, Memorial is a regional cardiac care center affiliated with the Methodist-DeBakey Heart Center in Houston. The hospital also is known for providing the area’s only comprehensive diabetes center—The Horace C. Polk Regional Diabetes Center.

Other centers of excellence include the Temple Imaging Center that offers some of the most advanced procedures in the area, including PET/CT scanning for cancer and Alzheimer's, 64 Slice CT scanning, Open Bore MRI, 4D Ultrasound, and digital mammography. Other specialty areas include Orthopedic care, Women's Services, Inpatient and Outpatient Rehabilitation, Homecare, Wound and Hyperbaric Therapy, Kidney & Diabetes Treatment, Sleep Disorders Treatment, and Express Lab. Memorial Health System of East Texas—founded and funded by the people it serves.

**Cutline:**

With sexual assaults occurring every 2 minutes in this country, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) at Memorial Medical Center - Livingston are providing information to protect community members and prevent these crimes. Sherry Keen, RNC C/A-C/P/SANE at Memorial, displays the colposcope equipment used to magnify trauma caused from a sexual assault. SANEs use the information collected to diagnose and form a treatment plan for the patient.