



**WATERLOO  
HEALTHCARE**  
Better Carts for Better Outcomes

## CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



*"As a forensic nurse, there's efficiency in using this cart while also maintaining chain of custody."*

—Anna, SANE Coordinator,  
Rush University Medical Center

## BACKGROUND

Rush University Medical Center, the largest nongovernmental employer on Chicago's Near West Side with nearly 10,000 employees, is considered one of the top 20 hospitals in the United States. The facility is recognized as a hub for developing and testing innovations and therapies, consistently earning "A" grades for patient safety. The medical center initiated its sexual assault program in 2018, providing around-the-clock services to survivors. Unfortunately, Rush University Medical Center's methods for sexual assault evidence retained some of the same practices for years: All unsealed evidence collected was placed into a bag that remained with the SANE who collected it. The strategy was to keep the evidence secure, but the process left victims uneasy after a traumatic experience.

Anna Candoleza Muglia noted the problem early in her 24-year career at the department. Victims, already suffering from the trauma of recent abuse, needed to feel safer. Systems needed to change to allow for greater security. In 2019, when named coordinator of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) division, she was presented with an opportunity to act. Waterloo Healthcare was already a vendor, but perhaps there was a way to work together.

## CHALLENGE

Several problems arose in creating a safer and more efficient SANE program. Traditional methods required nurses to place evidence in bags and carry them, which slowed down workflows and presented security risks. Maintaining an unbroken chain of custody for the evidence was legally required; however, if multiple people were involved in the chain, documenting the process became increasingly complex.

On top of the internal struggles, sexual assault survivors also became concerned when the evidence left their sight. They needed reassurance that the evidence of their crimes would remain within reach, in eyesight, if possible.

The physical challenges had their own set of internal ramifications. Busy hospitals needed to adopt a system that was both time- and space-efficient. And, with an already limited budget, every purchase had to fulfill multiple functions.

## OUR SOLUTION

Anna discovered Waterloo's mobile storage cart solution at the 2019 Emergency Nurses Association conference. Though Waterloo primarily marketed the cart for secure storage of anesthesia drugs and narcotics in operating rooms, Anna immediately recognized its potential for her SANE program applications.



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### OUR SOLUTION (CONT.)

Waterloo carts are mobile and highly customizable, which means they can be moved to any examination room without requiring permanent secured cabinets. They're also designed with built-in pull-out shelves that provide workspace for documentation.

But the feature Anna found most compelling provided a solution to one of the SANE program's biggest problems: victim peace of mind. The Waterloo cart features a secure electronic locking system and digital access records built in. A passcode-protected lock can only be opened by authorized personnel, and every access attempt is time-stamped on an electronic record. The security features made it a great prospect in instilling peace of mind for sexual assault victims.

### OUTCOME

Anna worked with our team to create something truly special: our new SANE cart. Since the implementation of the SANE carts, workflows have vastly improved. SANEs now leave evidence in the room inside a locked cart with their patients. The workspace and storage solutions have made it easier for nurses to focus on what's truly important: the people.

Victims who go through their department now are ensured a secure evidence procedure. The evidence is never out of their sight, and only a limited number of nurses are authorized to open the cart. And, whenever the evidence needs to be accessed, there is detailed documentation to ensure that victims always feel safe.

The carts have become so popular that Rush University Medical Center now recognizes Waterloo's SANE carts as part of its best-practice solutions.

*"As a forensic nurse, there's efficiency in using this cart while also maintaining chain of custody. The visual of having a cart that's safe is also good for the patient. I tell patients, 'I'm putting this all in here, and I have to keep that safe. No one else, including you, can open this cabinet. I lock it, and no one can open it except me when we continue with your forensic exam.' This gives patients the impression that their evidence is secure. No one's touching it, no one's stepping away with it. The visual confirmation of chain of custody is there for the patient."*

—Anna, SANE Coordinator, Rush University Medical Center