

Dr. Charles Danielson's Statement on MMA's Behalf at the Governor's Domestic Violence Press Conference

The Maine Medical Association applauds Governor Baldacci and Dr Mills, our state health officer, for shining the light of attention on this problem. The statistics paint a dark and unappealing picture.

Domestic violence and abuse thrives in the shadows and withers in the light of day. Governor Baldacci has clearly stated that Mainers do not accept domestic violence and sexual assault. Medical research shows that routinely asking about domestic violence dramatically increases its detection. Surprisingly simple questions are known to be effective. I believe today's attention will make it easier for some victims to end their abuse.

Dr Mills challenges physicians and other health professionals to screen for domestic violence and sexual assault then make appropriate referrals. The MMA and other organizations are ready to accept that challenge. In September of this year our membership endorsed a resolution to that effect. Our Public Health Committee and our President, Dr Stephanie Lash of Bangor, are requesting that medical specialty societies incorporate training on screening and referral for domestic violence and sexual assault in their continuing education in the next year.

The Maine Physicians For Social Responsibility are represented here today and they will be doing a lot of training. They will be doing physician and office staff training at my office this winter. And we are facilitating a grand rounds MGMC in the near future.