

BY adding to

Article - Health - General

Section 19-1701 through ~~19-1706~~ ~~19-705~~ 19-1705 to be under the new subtitle
 "Subtitle 17. Domestic Violence Medical Response Act"

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1990 Replacement Volume and 1993 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, The Office of the United States Surgeon General has found domestic violence to be one of the major public health problems in American society today, with research revealing that domestic violence is responsible for three times as many emergency department visits as auto accidents, muggings, and rapes combined; and

WHEREAS, According to Federal Bureau of Investigation statistics, a battering incident occurs every 15 seconds in the United States and more than 2,000 women die annually as a result of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, One out of every five women will be a victim of domestic violence during her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Medical costs associated with domestic violence total more than \$3 billion annually with at least another \$100 million added to the cost to business in lost wages, sick leave, nonproductivity, and absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-five to forty percent of battered women are assaulted during pregnancy, and a recent March of Dimes study notes that battering during pregnancy represents the single largest cause of birth defects, resulting in miscarriage, preterm labor, low birth weight, fetal injury, and fetal death; and

WHEREAS, Studies have repeatedly indicated that physicians who treat battered women in emergency department settings fail to make referrals or in any other way respond to cases of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, Early recognition and intervention has a clear impact on the morbidity and mortality of violence against women in the home; and

WHEREAS, A significant improvement in the emergency department response to domestic violence is critical; ~~now, therefore, and~~

WHEREAS, The Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland has joined with the Maryland Alliance Against Family Violence to create the Maryland Physicians' Campaign Against Family Violence; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland Physicians' Campaign Against Family Violence will work with hospitals and local medical societies and will utilize hospital facilities to train local health care practitioners to recognize, treat, and refer the victims of family violence; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows: