

December 2008

Dear York County Health Care Provider:

On December 9, 2008, Maine's Public Health Director, Dr. Dora Ann Mills, issued a Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Public Health Advisory driven by alarming increases in domestic violence-related homicides in our state. So far this year, domestic violence-related deaths in Maine have risen from 8 in 2007 to 17 in 2008. 60% of Maine's homicides are related to domestic violence. Dr. Mills believes that health care providers, can play an important role in preventing further violence.

According to the Public Health Advisory (attached here), the Maine CDC recommends:

- Routine screening in all health care settings for domestic violence and sexual assault victimization; and,
- Physicians and other health care providers should be familiar with domestic violence and sexual assault resources (please see attached Health Care Advisory and information provided below).

To assist you toward those ends we have attached *RADAR – A Domestic Violence Intervention for Health Care Providers* which can be printed and posted in exam rooms; and we are writing to tell you a little bit about your local domestic violence program and how we can support you in your efforts to help your patients who may be living with abuse in their own homes.

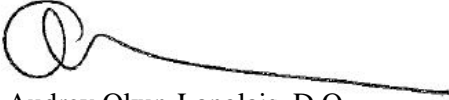
Caring Unlimited is York County's only domestic violence program. We have provided comprehensive safety planning and support services to thousands of individuals and families seeking safety from domestic abuse since 1977. Every year Caring Unlimited responds to requests for assistance from many hundreds of York County residents through our 24-Hour Hotline, Emergency Shelter, Legal Assistance and Outreach Programs offering individual and group services at our Resource Centers in Sanford, Biddeford, Limerick and Kittery. In addition, Caring Unlimited provides consultation, technical assistance and community education and training to local agencies and organizations focused on best practices and effective responses to victims and their children. Caring Unlimited looks forward to supporting your efforts to effectively respond to your patients living with abuse in their own homes.

Please don't hesitate to refer them to our 24-Hour Hotline (1-800-239-7298) for comprehensive safety planning and support services available to them 24 hours a day when they are ready. And please feel free to call yourself to consult about best practices in working with victims of domestic abuse.

We'd also like you to know that our Community Response Coordinator, Sherry Lane, is available to provide information sessions that focus on these issues for your staff. Sherry is well-known as one of the best domestic abuse community educators in the state. She can be contacted by calling 490-3227 x105 or by email at sedwards@caring-unlimited.org.

We're here if you need us and thank you in advance for your efforts to prevent further abuse in lives of your patients dealing with these very complex issues.

Sincerely,



Audrey Okun-Langlais, D.O.
Caring Unlimited Board of Directors



Barbara Potyk, M.D.
Caring Unlimited Board of Directors



Cindi Peoples
Executive Director