

Significant Events in Maine's Response to Domestic Abuse

- 1964 Haven House, California. First shelter established by Al-Anon women for families of alcoholic abusers.
- 1973 Spruce Run is born in Bangor, Maine. First domestic violence project in the state.
- Domestic violence projects spring up all over Maine throughout the seventies: Augusta, Portland, Auburn, Presque Isle, Sanford, Dover-Foxcroft, Machias, and Rockland.
- 1977 The first statewide meeting is held and the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services (MCFCS) is established. In 2001, the coalition's name is changed to the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV).
- 1978 An act to approve funds for emergency shelters for victims of family violence is presented to the Maine Legislature. Governor Longley vetoed the bill; the veto is overridden in the House but sustained in the Senate.
- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence is incorporated. Family Crisis Services (then called Family Crisis Shelter) in Portland opens Maine's first shelter for battered women.
- 1979 Maine Legislature approves funding for shelters for victims of domestic violence, \$142,500 statewide.
- 1980 Legislature enact "An ACT Concerning Abuse Between Family or Household Members", creating new criminal and civil remedies for victims of domestic violence, stating that "a law enforcement officer at the scene of an alleged incident of abuse shall use the same standard of enforcing relevant Maine Criminal Code sections when the incident involves family or household members as when it involves strangers".
- Maine's Protection from Abuse Order is created in the same legislation.
- 1984 HUD issues regulations making battered women eligible for special preference in receiving federal housing assistance.
- Victims of Crime Act passes in Congress, which, among other things, provides (c. \$81,000) federal funds for domestic violence programs.
- 1985 Legislature approves funding for Maine's domestic violence projects to establish or expand children's programs and community response programs.

- Marital rape law passes in Maine; the "spousal exemption" was removed from the sexual assault statutes.
- 1987 Maine's domestic violence programs receive \$45,000 statewide from federal funds authorized under the Family Violence Prevention Services Act.
- Spruce Run's former Community Education Coordinator and former Spruce Run Steering Committee member, Mary Cathcart is elected to the Maine House of Representatives.
- 1988 The "Information Guide for Abused Women in Maine" is published by the Maine Division, American Association of University Women and the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services.
- 1989 Legislature approves additional state funds for domestic violence programs to expand outreach activities and other services, bringing the total state funds for these programs to one million dollars.
- The Shelter Operating Subsidy Grant program is funded by the legislature through the Maine State Housing Authority, providing funds for all Maine's homeless shelters, including the domestic violence shelters.
- 1990 Maine's Commission on Domestic Abuse is established.
- Significant cuts are made to the General Assistance and AFDC programs in Maine, making it harder for poor women to escape abuse.
- 1991 State law mandates that domestic violence must be taken into account in determining custody and visitation.
- 1993 LD 1407 establishes a "Study Concerning Parental Rights and Responsibilities in Cases of Domestic Abuse" to make recommendations regarding custody, visitation, batterers' intervention programs, and related topics to the 115th legislature.
- 1993 Maine's stalking law is passed, adding language to the protection from abuse and criminal harassment statutes to include stalking behavior.
- The Next Step becomes the tenth member project of the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services.
- 1994 The federal Violence Against Women Act, introduced in 1990 by Senators Biden and Cohen, is combined with the Crime Bill and becomes law, creating new funding opportunities, the interstate enforcement of protection from abuse orders, and the prohibition of weapons possession by persons subject to protection from abuse orders.
- 1995 Public Law 405, an act to implement the recommendations of the study concerning

parental rights and responsibilities (see 1993) is passed, requiring state certification of batterer intervention programs, mandating for development of standards for batterer intervention programs and visitation centers, expanding conditions of parent-child contact in cases of domestic abuse, establishing training requirements and clarifying duties for guardians ad litem.

1996 Increased staff size at Spruce Run by 1 FTE – first expansion of staff numbers since 1986.

1997 Spruce Run opens three units of transitional housing in Bangor, in partnership with Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) owning the units, and Spruce Run selecting residents and providing case management.

Spruce Run adds a legal advocate to staff, funded by a collaborative grant with the Penquis Law Project.

Spruce Run staff provide training on domestic violence for all employees of Bangor Mental Health Institute.

The Maine Homicide Review Panel is created.

Maine's protection from abuse statute is amended to comply with federal law prohibiting possession of firearms by people subject to protection orders where there is a finding of a "credible threat to the physical safety of an intimate partner or a child"

A family division is created within the state's district court.

1998 Spruce Run hosted a conference on Mental Health and Domestic Violence, featuring Dr. Mary Harvey of the Cambridge Hospital's Victims of Violence Program as the keynote speaker.

1999 In collaboration with the Muskie School, Spruce Run and (other MCEVDV projects) established outreach positions at Eastern Maine Medical Center and at Child Protective Services. Funding from Maine DHHS created a similar outreach position at the DHHS welfare office. All these changes brought Spruce Run's staff to 16.

An Act to Protect Victims of Crimes in the Workplace requires Maine employers to grant reasonable and necessary leave from work, with or without pay, for an employee to attend court, get medical treatment, or obtain other services necessitated by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, unless the employer would sustain undue hardship as a result.

2000 In a collaborative grant with the Training and Development Corporation, Spruce Run developed a 30 hour training on domestic violence, the work place, and assisting women in the "welfare to work" program.

Spruce Run staff numbers 18.

The Maine Legislature passes a resolution to establish a Commission to Study Domestic Violence. The multi-disciplinary Commission meets for a period of many months and releases a report in December of 2001, and in 2002 the Legislature enacts a resulting bill that requires additional information to bail commissioners before pre-conviction bail may be set and additional law enforcement policies on victim notification upon an abuser's release from jail.

In Governor Angus King's State of the State Address, he declares violence against women and children "Maine's Public Enemy Number One" while pointing to seats in the Legislature hall that were left empty to represent those who were killed by domestic abusers.

2001 The Maine Legislature passes the "Violence Intervention and Prevention" (VIP) bill to increase funding to domestic violence projects and sexual assault centers for the first time in 16 years.

2002 The Maine Legislature enacts a law which grants judges the discretion to issue a temporary protection from abuse order that prohibits the defendant from possessing a firearm or other dangerous weapon.

As new money came from the VIP, the 9/11 attacks and subsequent changes in federal funding opportunities resulted in the loss of federal funds that offset any gains that VIP might have provided, and Maine state revenues were in decline, resulting in the VIP funds promised for the second half of the biennium being eliminated. SR had to eliminate the Eastern Maine Medical Center based advocate and scale back its Child Protective liaison work.

SR staff numbers 17.

2003 On October 7, 2004 Maine Governor John Baldacci signed an Executive Order that required all state agencies to partner with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault to develop, implement, and promote workplace policies that address domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Spruce Run is a primary partner in carrying out the work of MCEDV in the implementation of the executive order.

Spruce Run receives the Agency of Distinction Award from WLBZ-TV and the United Way of Eastern Maine.

Spruce Run launched a \$500,000 campaign to grow its Endowment Trust - achieving the goal five years later.

2004 Spruce Run launched the Library Campaign for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, donating books to nearly all libraries in Penobscot County. The campaign was later taken up by the MCEDV and implemented statewide.

Enhancing Spruce Run's collaborations with the Penobscot Nation, we create the position of Justice System Coordinator, including expanded outreach to Penobscot Nation's court and public welfare system.

SR staff numbers 15.

2005

SR staff numbers 14.

2006

L.D. 1881 - An Act Amending the Animal Welfare Laws is signed into law. This bill allows people to request protection for their companion animals & companion livestock when requesting a Permanent Protection From Abuse (PFA) order for themselves.

Spruce Run is able to re-establish its Child Protective Liaison position as MCEdV receives an Office on Violence Against Women, Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant. Project partners also include members of the New Mainers Domestic Violence Partnership: United Somali Women of Maine, Sudanese Development Institute of Maine, Kalila Oon Center, and Tengo Voz.

Spruce Run staff numbers 13 coordinators and 4 associates, a newly developed type of employee with more limited responsibilities than coordinators.

2007

L.D. 988 - An Act To Improve the Protection from Abuse Laws Signed into law June 20, 2007, this bill allows current and former dating partners, whether or not sexual partners and stalking and sexual assault victims to seek relief under the protection from abuse laws.

2008

Spruce Run adds an attorney to staff as MCEdV is awarded a continuation of its Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) Grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. The LAV program expands to providing funding for seven (7) domestic violence projects to employ an attorney to provide civil legal representation to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking.

In collaboration with Penquis, Spruce Run extends Transitional housing and services to Millinocket.

Spruce Run receives and extension and expansion of its Transitional Housing and services grant to extend these services to Lincoln, bringing total Transitional Housing capacity to 20 units.

Spruce Run celebrates its 35th anniversary with a Homecoming Reunion.

SR staff is 15 coordinators, 4 associates, and 1 attorney.

