

American Medical Women's Association  
Position Paper on Principals of Domestic Violence

The American Medical Women's Association, an organization of women physicians and medical students, has a particular concern with all issues that affect the health of women. The association recognized that domestic battering is the single major cause of injury to women that these injured patients present to an emergency room or to a physician's office. Battering as the cause of injury frequently goes undiagnosed and untreated, leaving the victim exposed to repeated violence. The Association deplores the victimization and advocates the following steps:

Develop and implementation of an education curriculum at the medical school and the post graduate levels, that would:

- Increase the clinician's awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Present models for taking an abuse history.
- Inform the medical student and physician about community resources for battered women.
- Development of programs in hospitals and health care facilities that provide care and support for victims of domestic violence.

Recognizing the critical role that physicians can play, AMWA makes a commitment to:

- Develop models for history taking when battery is suspected, and educate members to an appropriate and complete history to determine if the injury was deliberately inflicted.
- Educate **its** members to assume responsibility to take all possible steps to aid the patient.
- Educate **its** members about psychological symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, that are frequently present in the victim of repeated violence, and the need for these symptoms to be treated in the context of the victims endangered situation.
- Support legislation and funding for treatment programs for the victims of domestic violence.
- Advocate funding for further research on the incidence, effective treatments, and prevention of domestic violence.