



What is LEVI?



In 1998, a series of particularly violent domestic assaults occurred in Longmont. The victims of these assaults did not seek help in leaving or changing a long-standing abusive relationship. The outcomes of these assaults were significant to our residents.

As a direct result of these incidents, a coordinated community-wide awareness and response to domestic violence was developed. The group, calling itself LEVI (Longmont Ending Violence Initiative), is made up of nearly 30 local agencies. We know from these incidents that if we can educate the community and connect victims and offenders with resources, we stand a chance of reducing domestic violence in the Longmont community.

LEVI is an awareness project designed to enlist the entire community in an effort to reduce domestic violence.

LEVI goals include:

Goal 1: ACCESS - Establish "one-call" access to information and services for the community to provide victims and offenders.

Goal 2: Prevention/Education - Help residents take greater responsibility in responding to domestic violence incidents and seek resources for incidents that they witness.

Goal 3: Public Information - Use a different paradigm to educate with the goal of heightening public awareness around domestic violence. This shift is centered on reframing domestic violence as a community issue vs. individual issue.

If you would like more information about the non-emergency services provided by LEVI, call 303.774.4534.

83% of all victims change their situation because someone asks about their relationship.

Healthcare professionals have the potential to play an important role in helping women and men in abusive relationships.

Doctors Have Duty to Report Domestic Violence

By Tim Johnson, Deputy District Attorney, Boulder County

These statements are a summary of the laws regarding medical practice and mandatory reporting of certain crimes. The statements are not intended as legal advice.

Colorado Law is straightforward regarding the reporting of domestic violence by medical providers. Pursuant to statute, "it shall be the duty of every licensee who attends or treats [any injury] that the licensee has reason to believe involves a criminal act, including injuries resulting from **domestic violence**, to report such injury at once to the police... or the sheriff of the county in which the licensee is located."¹

"Domestic Violence" is defined in that same statute as being "an act of violence upon a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship... [and] also includes any other crime against a person... when used as a method of coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge directed against a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship."²

"Intimate relationship" is a relationship between spouses, former spouses, past or present unmarried couples, or persons who are both the parents of a common child.³

The law requires all "licensees" to report acts of domestic violence. "Licensees" pursuant to the Medical Practice⁴ section include any physician or physician assistant who is licensed by the State of Colorado.⁵ The practice of medicine includes:

- Holding out one's self to the public as being able to diagnose, treat, prescribe for, palliate, or prevent any human disease, ailment, pain, injury, deformity, or physical or mental condition, whether by the use of drugs, surgery, manipulation, electricity, telemedicine, the interpretation of tests, including primary diagnosis of pathology specimens, images or photographs, or any physical, mechanical, or other means whatsoever;⁶
- Suggesting, recommending, prescribing, or administering any form of treatment operation, or healing for the intended palliation, relief, or cure of any physical or mental disease, ailment, injury, condition, or defect of any person with the intention of receiving therefore, either directly or indirectly, any fee, gift, or compensation whatsoever;⁷
- The maintenance of an office or other place for the purpose of examining or treating persons afflicted with disease, injury, or defect of body or mind;⁸
- Using the title M.D., O.D., physician, surgeon, or any word or abbreviation to indicate or induce others to believe that one is licensed to practice medicine in this state and engaged in the diagnosis or treatment of persons afflicted with disease, injury, or defect of the body or mind, *except as otherwise expressly permitted by the laws of this state...*⁹

Surgeries Help Push Abuse to Past

For the first time in 26 years, Lyn Allen can leave her house and not be reminded of the domestic abuse she endured.

Every time the Estes Park resident went out, she said, people stared at the facial injuries she suffered at the hands of a boyfriend.

Last month, Allen, 50, underwent a four-hour surgery to reconstruct her nose, which was disfigured when her boyfriend beat her. Once, he tried to shove her head through the glass window of an oven, Allen said of the man who abused her for six years. She said her neck and back are permanently disabled because he repeatedly kicked her while wearing steel-toed boots.

But now, Allen said, she can face the world with her head held high. The Face to Face program has given her a newfound confidence.

"It's hard to believe I went (through that abuse) once," she said. "And it breaks my heart that I'm

not the only one."

Longmont plastic surgeon Dr. Kevin Cavanaugh recently joined Face to Face, a national program offering free plastic surgery to victims of domestic abuse. And Allen says she is thrilled. "I know there are so many women like me," she said.

Longmont traditionally has had higher reported rates of domestic violence than any other city in Boulder County. Officials say they're not sure if there actually are more incidents of domestic violence here, or if people in Longmont are more willing to report it. At the end of 2003, Longmont reported 822 cases of domestic violence; the second-rated city was Boulder with 394 cases, according to the Boulder County Domestic Abuse Prevention Project.

"We have problems in our own back yard," said Ann Holton, director of development and humanitarian programs for Face-to-Face.

Victims of domestic

violence are "really a forgotten segment of society," Holton said, noting their need to heal both emotionally and physically.

"Every time they look in the mirror, they are reminded of the abuse," she said. "And this is a way we can help heal their outsides and give them a new lease on life."

Once the group agrees to help the victim, the surgery is performed free, Cavanaugh said. Local anesthesiologists and Longmont United Hospital also provide their services free under the program. Seven Colorado doctors participate in the program.

Cavanaugh said he is excited to be participating in the program because it provides help to people regardless of their financial status and gives them incentive to stay away from abusive relationships.

"There aren't words for what Face to Face gave to me. There is no way I can ever repay them."

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How to Help a Victim of Domestic Violence:

1. Respect confidentiality. All discussions must occur in private without others present. This is essential to building trust and ensuring their safety.
2. Believe and validate their experiences. Listen to them and believe them. Acknowledge their feelings and let them know they are not alone. Many people have similar experiences.
3. Acknowledge the injustice. The violence perpetrated against them is not their fault. No one deserves to be abused.
4. Respect their autonomy. Respect their right to make decisions in their life, when they are ready. They are the experts on their own life. Let them know you will be there for them when they are ready.
5. Help them plan for future safety. What have they tried in the past to keep them safe? Is it working? Do they have a place to go if they need to get away?
6. Promote access to community resources. For more information about non-emergency Longmont area resources, please call LEVI at 303.774.4534.

■ Doctors report domestic violence - - - continued from cover

- Performing any kind of surgical operation upon a human being;¹⁰ or
- The practice of midwifery (with exceptions stated in articles 37 and 38 of Title 12)¹¹

Licensing is **not** required in certain instances including (1) the gratuitous rendering of services in an emergency, (2) rendering of services by an "out-of-state" physician, (3) the practice of dentistry, (4) the practice of podiatry, (5) the practice of chiropractic, (6) the practice of religious worship, (7) the practice of Christian Science, (8) the performance of medical officers in the United States armed forces, (9) the rendering of nursing services (and delegated nursing functions), (10) the rendering of services by a medical student, (11) the administration and monitoring of medications in facilities governed by Colorado law, (12) the rendering of acupuncture services, (13) the administration of nutrition or fluids through gastrostomy tubes, (14) and services by a physical therapist (subject to limitations of Colorado law).¹²

Although the items listed above do not require a license to practice under the Medical Practice statutes¹³, any person engaged in a medical practice who has obtained a license from the State of Colorado to practice medicine pursuant to Colorado Law¹⁴ must report acts of domestic violence even if they perform the items listed in the previous paragraph.

It is important to keep in mind that there is a separate duty to report child abuse under Colorado law.¹⁵ This list is more exhaustive of medical occupations required to report and includes dentists, chiropractors, nurses, and other hospital personnel. Domestic violence and child abuse may overlap in certain situations and create a duty to report both acts. For example, exposing a child to domestic violence in the home may "permit a child to be unreasonably placed in a situation that poses a threat of injury to the child's life or health"¹⁶ and thus require reporting as child abuse.

Finally, the mandatory reporting statutes provide immunity to any civil and criminal liability as long as the person making the report acts in good faith.¹⁷

Timothy L. Johnson, deputy district attorney for the Boulder County District Attorney's Office. Johnson participates in the Boulder County Law Enforcement Domestic Violence Task Force which is a multi-agency group that addresses domestic violence issues and policies within the county.

¹For more information, see Colorado Revised Statutes 12-36-135, 12-36-106, 12-36-101, 19-3-304, and 18-6-401.

¹Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-135(1) (2004), ²Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-135(1.5) (a) (2004), ³Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-135(1.5) (b) ⁴See Title 12, Article 36 Colo. Rev. Statutes, 5Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(6) (2004), 6Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(a) (2004) 7Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(b) (2004), 8Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(c) (2004), 9Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(d) (2004), 10Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(e) (2004), 11Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(1)(f) (2004), 12See Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(3) (2004) for the entire list of exceptions. 13Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-101, et seq. (2004), 14Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-106(2004), 15Colo. Rev. Statutes §19-3-304(2) (2004), 16Colo. Rev. Statutes §18-6-401(1) (a); the quoted section is a definition of child abuse, 17Colo. Rev. Statutes §12-36-135(2)