

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2000

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Legislative Document

No. 2374

S.P. 923

In Senate, January 12, 2000

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### An Act to Establish an Office of Women's Health.

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Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MITCHELL of Penobscot.  
Cosponsored by Representative KANE of Saco and  
Senators: AMERO of Cumberland, DAGGETT of Kennebec, DAVIS of Piscataquis,  
FERGUSON of Oxford, KONTOS of Cumberland, PARADIS of Aroostook, PINGREE of  
Knox, Representative: FULLER of Manchester.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

4 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA c. 268** is enacted to read:

6 **CHAPTER 268**

8 **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

10 **§1656. Office of Women's Health established**

12 1. Office established. The Office of Women's Health,  
14 referred to in this chapter as the "office," is established  
16 effective July 1, 2001. The office exists within the hierarchy  
of the Bureau of Health, but includes staff and resources of the  
Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance  
Abuse Services.

18 2. Office purpose and goals; strategies. The purpose of  
20 the office is to expand the State's public health concerns and  
22 focus to include a comprehensive outlook on the overall health  
24 status of women. The primary goals of the office are the  
prevention of disease and improvement in the quality of life for  
women over their entire lifespan.

26 The department and the Department of Mental Health, Mental  
28 Retardation and Substance Abuse Services shall develop jointly  
strategies for achieving these goals within the office that  
include, but are not limited to:

30 A. Developing a strategic plan to improve public services  
32 and programs targeting women;

34 B. Conducting policy analysis on specific issues related to  
women's health;

36 C. Facilitating communication among the departments'  
38 programs and between the office and external women's health  
groups and community-based organizations;

40 D. Building public health awareness and capacity regarding  
42 women's health issues by providing a series of services  
including evaluation, recommendation, technical assistance  
and training; and

44 E. Developing initiatives for modification or expansion of  
46 women-oriented services with the intent of establishing  
48 meaningful public and private partnerships in the future.

50 3. Office duties. The office shall:

2 A. Develop and continually reevaluate mechanisms to address  
3 women's health issues, including, but not limited to,  
4 osteoporosis, arthritis, domestic violence, exposure to  
5 diethylstilbestrol, eating disorders and elder women's  
6 health;

7 B. Provide technical assistance to other public or private  
8 programs to develop appropriate gender-specific intervention;

9 C. Analyze health data and disseminate reports;

10 D. Support interagency work groups to maximize efficient  
11 use of state resources;

12 E. Review proposed legislation;

13 F. Provide technical assistance to the Legislature, the  
14 Governor and state agencies;

15 G. Develop health policy analysis documents;

16 H. Monitor federal and other funding sources and apply for  
17 funds to meet specific objectives;

18 I. Support regular women's health conferences;

19 J. Develop and disseminate a periodic newsletter or other  
20 communication to key stakeholders to ensure access to  
21 women's health information;

22 K. Respond to public requests for information on women's  
23 health issues; and

24 L. Identify and support needs of special populations, which  
25 may include minorities, lesbians or incarcerated or disabled  
26 women.

27 **Sec. 2. Report.** The Department of Human Services and the  
28 Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance  
29 Abuse Services shall submit a joint report to the First Regular  
30 Session of the 120th Legislature by January 6, 2001 on the  
31 progress toward implementation of the Office of Women's Health.  
32 The report must include any proposed legislation necessary to  
33 fully implement or enhance the effectiveness of the Office of  
34 Women's Health, including a proposal for staffing the office.  
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## SUMMARY

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4       This bill establishes the Office of Women's Health in the  
Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, with resources  
and personnel also drawn from the Department of Mental Health,  
6       Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, to provide  
leadership and coordination in developing a comprehensive outlook  
8       on the overall health status of women.