

# **mecasa**

## **MAINE COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT**

April 11, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Melissa Martin and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), the organization which represents and serves Maine's sexual violence prevention and response programs as well as Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers. MECASA initiates and advocates for victim-centered public policy; provides expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners; and funds the service providers in your communities.

MECASA is here today in support of LD 1040 in support of LD 1040 An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-affirming Care for Mainecare Members. Thank you to Representatives Moonen, Rana, Craven, Graham, Madigan, Mayer, Shagoury, and Zager, and Senators Baldacci and Ingwersen for bringing this legislation.

At least 70% of Trans Mainers experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. (*Maine Transgender Community Survey Results.*) 83% experience this before transitioning. (*Maine Transgender Community Survey Results.*) These experiences often begin in childhood. (*Maine Transgender Community Survey Results.*)

Trans Mainers are also less likely to access the services or systems such as sexual assault. (*Maine Transgender Community Services Results.*) Although not accessing these services happens for a variety of valid reasons, it also means Trans survivors of sexual violence may not access other forms of financial compensation such as restitution through the criminal justice system, victim's compensation, and other financial compensation. That is particularly concerning when we understand that the cost of sexual assault is over \$100,000 for the average survivor. (*Center for Disease Control.*)

There are very concrete things you can do to address these gaps. When Trans Mainers are able to access gender affirming care and transition this reduces vulnerability to sexual violence. (*Maine Transgender Community Survey.*)

In addition, the most recent Needs Assessment conducted by the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault found that the largest need of sexual violence survivors across the state in general is basic needs, such as housing, food, and healthcare. Because of the high rates of sexual violence in the Trans community, you have the opportunity to meet the basic, essential healthcare needs of a group of survivors by supporting this bill.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will support LD 1040 and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

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### About Maine's Sexual Assault Service Providers

One in five Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Each year, 14,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

Maine's sexual violence service providers provide free and confidential services across the state to victims/survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault and those close to them, as well as to individuals who wish to increase their understanding of the issues. Just some of the services include a 24-hour statewide sexual assault helpline, crisis intervention and information, support groups, in-person accompaniment and advocacy through the medical and legal systems, and school- and community-based prevention education. Services are provided for a victim/survivor regardless of when they experienced sexual violence, and regardless of what type of sexual violence they experienced. Types of sexual violence include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment and gender-based bullying, child sexual abuse, elder sexual abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship.

*24/7 Confidential*

*Maine Sexual Assault Helpline: 1-800-871-7741*

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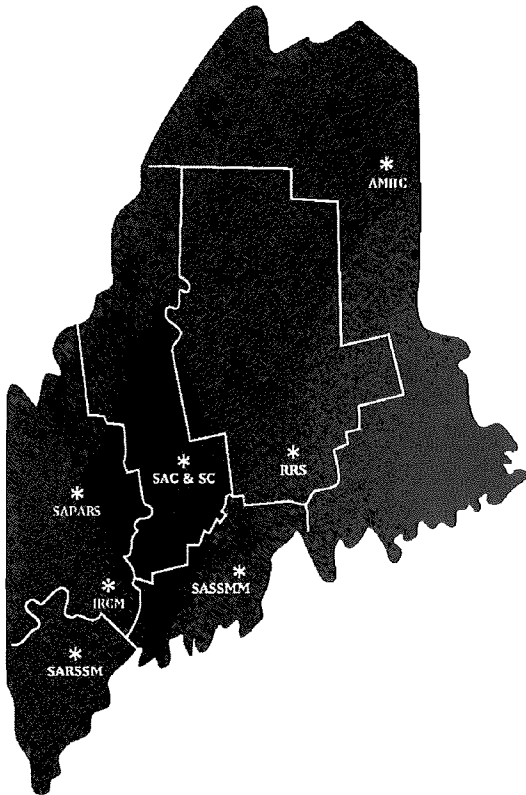
<sup>1</sup> Dumont, R. & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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**MAINE COALITION AGAINST  
SEXUAL ASSAULT**

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207-626-0034



**STATEWIDE  
SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE  
1-800-871-7741**

**Free. Private. 24/7.**

## **MAINE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTERS**

### **AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC)**

Serving Aroostook, Hancock, & Washington Counties •  
amhcsexualassaultservices.org

### **Immigrant Resource Center of Maine**

Serving Androscoggin & Cumberland Counties • ircofmaine.org

### **Rape Response Services (RRS)**

Serving Penobscot & Piscataquis Counties • rrsonline.org

### **Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (SAPARS)**

Serving Androscoggin, Oxford & Franklin Counties and the towns of  
Bridgton & Harrison • sapars.org

### **Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center (SAC & SC)**

Serving Kennebec & Somerset Counties • silentnomore.org

### **Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM)**

Serving Cumberland & York Counties • sarsonline.org

### **Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (SASSMM)**

Serving Eastern Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Knox, Waldo & Lincoln  
Counties • sassmm.org

## **MORE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES**

Maine TransNet • mainetrans.net • info@mainetransnet.org

Wabanaki Women's Coalition • wabanakiwomenscoalition.org  
207-763-3478

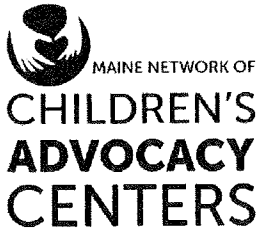
Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-551-3639

Houlton Band of Maliseets, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-532-6401

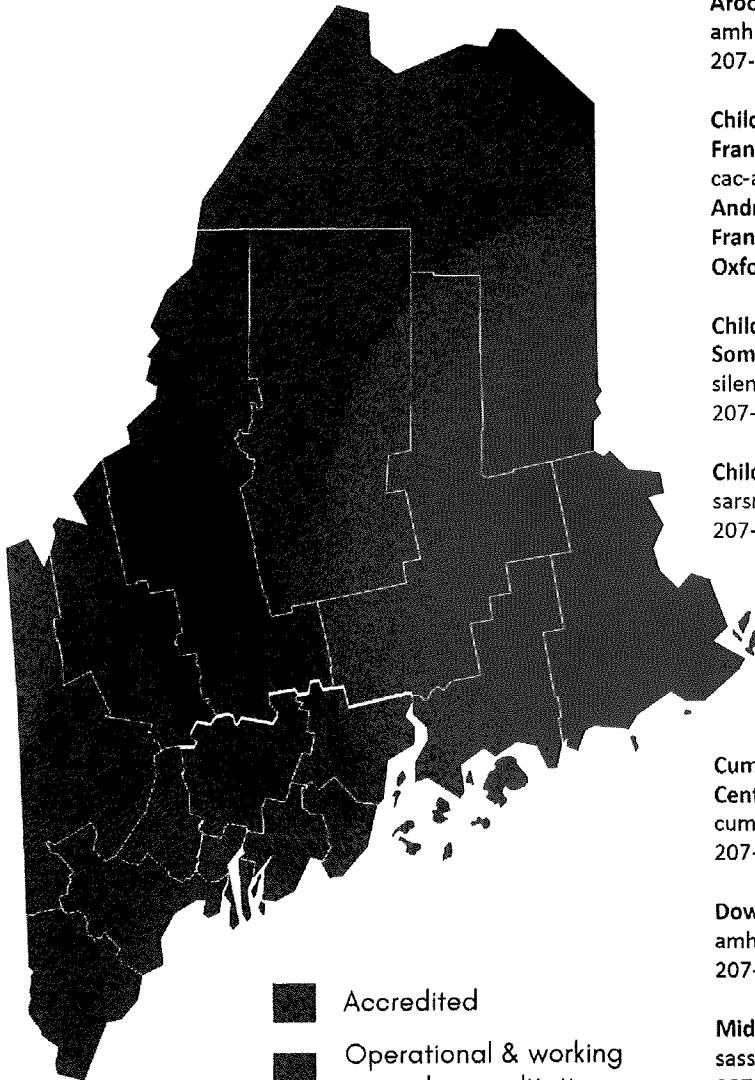
Indian Township Passamaquoddy, Domestic & Sexual  
Violence Advocacy Center • 207-214-1917

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations • 1-877-853-2613

Penobscot Indian Nation, Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Advocacy Center • 207-631-4886



# Maine's Children's Advocacy Centers



- Accredited
- Operational & working toward accreditation

**Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center**  
amhcsas.org  
207-472-6134

**Children's Advocacy Center of Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties**  
cac-afco.org  
Androscoggin: 207-784-0436  
Franklin: 207-778-9777  
Oxford: 207-739-1228

**Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec & Somerset Counties**  
silentnomore.org/about-our-cac  
207-861-4491

**Children's Advocacy Center of York County**  
sarsmm.org  
207-459-2380

**Cumberland County Children's Advocacy Center**  
cumberlandcountycac.org  
207-879-6160

**Downeast Children's Advocacy Center**  
amhcsas.org  
207-255-3687

**Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center**  
sassmm.org  
207-522-7162

**Penquis Children's Advocacy Center**  
penquiscac.org  
207-974-2469