



Advocacy in action: Protecting reproductive health

What's at stake

In its 6–3 ruling in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the nearly 50-year-old *Roe v. Wade* precedent ensuring patients' legal right to abortion care nationwide.

The end of *Roe* places the government in the patient-physician relationship, risks serious adverse health outcomes and criminalization of care.

The *Dobbs* decision represents “an egregious allowance of government intrusion into the medical examination room, a direct attack on the practice of medicine and the patient-physician relationship, and a brazen violation of patients' rights to evidence-based reproductive health services,” AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., MD, said the day the ruling was issued.

Shifting reproductive health decision-making to lawmakers opens a deep political rift between states over access to reproductive health services that places sound medical practice and the health of patients at risk, leaving millions with little or no access to reproductive health services. More than a dozen states have banned abortion, some with virtually no exceptions, and some states are threatening physicians who provide care with prison time.

With outright bans or severe restrictions, some will be forced to travel outside the state to obtain an abortion. Other patients will self-manage abortion, and yet others still will be forced to carry their pregnancy to term. Each outcome increases the likelihood of negative consequences to one's physical and psychological health.

The AMA's position

The AMA and more than two dozen leading medical organizations had filed an amicus brief (PDF) with the high court, explaining to the justices that “abortion is safe medical care.”



The AMA supports patients' access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care options, including abortion and contraception, as a right. Physicians' ethical obligation is to help patients choose the optimal course of treatment, through shared decision-making that is fully informed by medical science and shaped by patient autonomy. Anything less puts patients at risk and undermines the practice of medicine and the nation's health.

Laws banning abortion also hurt patients from economically marginalized, rural, and historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups the most.?

AMA advocacy in action

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The AMA has:

- Supported continued, unrestricted access to mifepristone through joint letters with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists to the White House (PDF) and the Food and Drug Administration (PDF)?
- Supported new Department of Health and Human Services privacy guidance making it clear that physicians are not required to disclose private medical information to third parties and providing patients with tips on the use of personal cell phones and tablets.?
- Submitted testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations as part of its hearing, “Roe Reversal: The Impacts of Taking Away the Constitutional Right to an Abortion.”??
- Joined the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and more than 75 other medical professional societies in voicing unified opposition to legislative interference in the relationship between patients, physicians and other health professionals.??
- Applauded President Joe Biden’s executive order pledging to explore pathways to protect access to reproductive health care services.?



- Supported the Biden administration's guidance on the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act superseding state bans on abortions and has filed amicus briefs in *Texas v. Becerra* and *United States v. Idaho* on the topic.
- Issued statement with American Pharmacists Association, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and National Community Pharmacists Association calling on policymakers to clarify legal obligations related to prescribing/ dispensing medications that are indicated for abortion but may be prescribed for other reasons (i.e., methotrexate).
- Filed a number of amicus briefs challenging state bans on abortion, including in Arizona.

The AMA is:

- Encouraging the administration and Justice Department to ensure patients can travel freely across state lines to get abortions when they can't in their own states, and that physicians who treat them won't be attacked by zealous prosecutors in restrictive states.
- Working to get the FDA to make oral hormonal contraceptives available over the counter.
- Collaborating with state medical associations to ensure access to medically necessary care and laws to protect abortion providers and patients from cross-state criminal and civil actions.

Advocacy resources

- AMA summary of regulatory changes in HIPAA privacy rule to support reproductive health care privacy (PDF)
- Recently adopted AMA policy on abortion, including at the 2022 AMA Annual Meeting only days ahead of the Dobbs ruling.
- *AMA Code of Medical Ethics* Opinion 4.27, "Abortion."

Learn more

Visit AMA Advocacy in Action to learn more about the advocacy priorities the AMA is actively working on.

Get involved

The AMA works to generate support for policies critical to the nation's health care system—and we can't do it without your help. Learn more about ways to get involved with AMA advocacy.