

THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

A Health Policy and Advocacy Update - March 2024

Thank you for your participation in the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine's **State Liaison Network** (SLN). Our quarterly newsletter brings you the latest advocacy, policy, and public health updates, happenings, and actions from the Society.

In this issue, you'll find:

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UPDATE ON MIFEPRISTONE COURT CASES

On March 26, the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments for *Food and Drug Administration v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*, the case that could [upend access to mifepristone](#). Several justices were skeptical of the plaintiff's arguments, questioning the extent of the claimed injury.

SMFM members, staff, and friends joined hundreds of our allies at a rally in front of the court to proudly show our support for mifepristone and abortion access. Speakers at the rally included patient and provider storytellers, state legislators and attorneys general, and more.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision in the case this June.



STATE LIAISONS IN ACTION

Following the sunset of their maternal mortality review committee last year, the **Idaho** legislature passed [H.399](#), a bill that authorizes the Board of Medicine to reestablish the committee.

Celebrating abortion access wins

In the last three months, several states have taken action to protect and expand access to abortion care.

In early March, the **Washington** legislature passed [HB 2115](#), which would allow providers to replace their names with clinic names on prescriptions used for medication abortion. The bill is currently with the Governor.

A few days later, the **Virginia** legislature passed two bills. The first, [SB 15](#), is a shield law that protects Virginia citizens who violate other state laws around providing or assisting with reproductive health care services as long as actions do not violate Virginia state law. The second, [SB 716](#), prohibits the Board of Medicine from taking disciplinary action against a physician who provides or receives abortion care that is not prohibited under state law, regardless of where the care was provided or received. This bill also prohibits the Board from refusing to issue a certificate or license to an applicant for providing or receiving an abortion that is not prohibited under state law. Both bills are with the Governor.

Last week, the Governor of **Wyoming** vetoed [HB 0148](#), which would have established any “surgical abortion facility” as an ambulatory surgical center, requiring additional licensing.

Monitoring abortion bans and restrictions

Earlier this month, **South Carolina’s** Governor enacted [HB 4159](#), banning the use of telehealth to prescribe medication abortion.

Last week, the **Idaho** legislature passed [H. 666](#), which prevents abortion providers from also providing materials or instructions related to sex education curricula.

This week, **South Dakota’s** Governor enacted [HB 1224](#), which requires the state to create an informational video and other materials describing the state’s abortion laws and medical care for pregnant patients experiencing health- and life-threatening conditions.

As of March 25, 2024, **21** states have abortion bans up to 20 weeks gestation currently or soon to be in effect: **Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.**

14 of these states (**Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia**) have total bans.

For up to date information on state abortion policies, see resources from [Abortion Finder](#), [Guttmacher Institute](#) and the [New York Times](#). You can also track pending state legislation alongside SMFM staff on our [Advocacy Hub](#).

TAKE ACTION

Share Anonymous Stories of Clinical Care

SMFM is regularly approached by policymakers and reporters who want to better understand the impacts of abortion restrictions on high-risk pregnant people and MFMs. One powerful way for MFMs to influence public policy and public understanding of abortion is to share their lived experiences. Recognizing that many MFMs may not be permitted to and/or are hesitant to describe what is happening with their patients in public forums, SMFM has created an anonymous story collection tool. [Learn more and share your story here.](#)

Track Policies and Submit a Request for Advocacy Support

Get more involved in advocacy in your state by [tracking policies alongside SMFM staff](#) and using our [Request Support form](#) to get assistance from Advocacy staff.

SMFM AND PARTNER RESOURCES

SMFM's Advocacy Blog

SMFM members and partners continue to publish pieces on our Advocacy Blog.

The latest blog comes from our partners at Democracy Forward. They outline [what's at stake](#) in the mifepristone case that was recently heard at the Supreme Court.

Another recent post, "[No Politician Should Play Doctor](#)," was written by [Drs. Justin Lappen and Leilah Zahedi-Sprung](#) in response to the Texas lawsuit on behalf of Kate Cox.



Guttmacher Monthly Provision Study

Guttmacher Institute's [Monthly Provision Study](#) tracks monthly estimates of medication and procedural abortions provided within the formal US health care system. It currently shows monthly data for all of 2023 and is designed to help measure the impacts of abortion policies on state-level abortion incidence and trends. According to the data from 2023, [medication abortion accounted for 63% of all abortions last year](#).

National Partnership for Women and Families and Physicians for Reproductive Health Issue Brief

This week, the National Partnership for Women and Families and Physicians for Reproductive Health (PRH) released a [new analysis on the impact of the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision on the abortion provider workforce](#).

The Issue Brief features individual stories from PRH fellows from across the country and provides critical context and data to the experiences PRH's provider network has been sharing both before and following the Supreme Court's decision.

Society of Family Planning: New #WeCount Report

#WeCount is a time-limited reporting effort that aims to capture the shifts in abortion volume, by state, by month, following the *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization* Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe*. At the end of February, the Society of Family Planning released its latest [report](#), outlining changes in abortion volume over the last 15 months.

WHAT WE'RE READING

["Abortion rights clashes with NIMBYism in California,"](#) *Politico*

["Children Born to Mothers With Pregnancy Complications Face Higher Heart Risks,"](#) *The New York Times*

["CVS and Walgreens Will Begin Selling Abortion Pills This Month,"](#) *The New York Times*

["Did an abortion ban cost a young Texas woman her life?"](#) *The New Yorker*

["Fleeing under the cover of darkness: How Idaho's abortion ban is changing pregnancy in the state," CNN](#)

["Google promised to delete location data on abortion clinic visits. It didn't, study says," The Guardian](#)

["I wasn't allowed to get the healthcare I needed': the women suing Tennessee for being denied abortions," The Guardian](#)

["In the fight over abortion rights, the government bans its first company from tracking medical visits," Politico](#)

["Jane Roe' is anonymous no more. The very public fight against abortion bans in 2023," NPR](#)

["The Least Understood Impact of Abortion Bans," Slate](#)

["Man accused of putting abortion-inducing drug in wife's water takes deal, to serve 180 days in jail," ABC13 News](#)

["Obstetricians in states where abortion mostly illegal face huge amounts of stress," NPR](#)

["One in 10 Pregnant Women With COVID Will Develop Long COVID," US News](#)

["Researchers call for more abortion studies to be retracted," Ohio Capital Journal](#)

["Something needs to change.' Woman denied abortion in South Carolina challenges ban," NPR](#)

["Study cited by Texas judge in abortion pill case retracted," Georgia Recorder](#)

["Texas teen birthrate rose for first time in 15 years after abortion ban, largely affecting Latinas," NBC News](#)

["What Can I Even Say Without Having to Go to Jail?," Mother Jones](#)

["What to Know About the Federal Law at the Heart of the Latest Supreme Court Abortion Case," The New York Times](#)

["The Year After a Denied Abortion," ProPublica](#)

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