

# THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Together advancing policies and implementing public health initiatives

[smfmadvocates.org](http://smfmadvocates.org)

## A Health Policy and Advocacy Update - *October 2025*

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.

- [Connect With Your Colleagues](#)
- [Upcoming Webinar](#)
- [Action Opportunities](#)
- [State Liaisons in Action](#)
- [SMFM Actions and Updates](#)
- [State Happenings](#)
- [SMFM and Partner Resources](#)
- [What We're Reading](#)



[Were you forwarded this email? Sign up for the State Liaison Network today!](#)

## CONNECT WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

In response to requests from members to have an easy and quick way to connect with other MFM advocates in their states, SMFM has launched the **State Liaison Network WhatsApp Community**, which includes separate chats for each state. We hope this will be a space for information sharing, collaboration, and support as you and your colleagues advocate in your institutions, your states, and at the federal level.

To ensure the community remains useful for members, we've created a list of dos and don'ts, which you can find linked [here](#).

**To join the WhatsApp Community and self-select into your state group chat, click below.** Please direct any questions to Samantha Berg, Manager of Advocacy at [sberg@smfm.org](mailto:sberg@smfm.org).

[Join the WhatsApp Community](#)

Having trouble finding your state group chat? Find the direct link [here](#).

*Please note that this community is only open to SLN members. If you were forwarded this newsletter, please sign up for the SLN before joining the WhatsApp Community.*

## UPCOMING WEBINAR: WASHINGTON, DC UPDATE



With the rapid pace of policy changes happening in Washington, DC, and around the country, it can be hard to keep up.

Join SMFM's Advocacy Team on **Thursday, October 9 from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET** to hear a summary of the latest policy news and what it might mean for you and the patients you serve.

We'll have time at the end of the presentation for open discussion about the issues most impacting your practice.

[Register Here](#)

You can see past webinars, including our July 24th Washington, DC update, on the [SMFM Advocacy Hub](#).

## TAKE ACTION

### Support Federal Maternal Health Programs

Last month, the CDC released [data collected from 46 states' MMRCs in 2021](#); this data showed that 87% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, and over half of deaths (57%) occurred after delivery, up to one year postpartum.

Federal investments power programs that work together to improve maternal health outcomes nationwide.

- **CDC's Safe Motherhood Program:** This includes initiatives like ERASE MM, PMSS, PRAMS, and POCs that identify causes of maternal deaths, recommend solutions, and drive quality improvement through data and best practices.
- **NIH/NICHD:** Supports research to generate the evidence clinicians use every day to improve care for pregnant and postpartum patients and infants.
- **HRSA's Maternal & Child Health Bureau** (including Healthy Start): Supports states and communities in delivering services to ensure all moms, babies, children, and youth are physically and mentally healthy, especially in rural and underserved areas.

These programs save lives, lower long-term costs, and strengthen families, communities, and local economies.

**SMFM urges you to contact your Senators and Representative today and ask them to support families in their district by championing federal maternal health programs.**

[Write Your Legislators](#)

### Submit a Request for Advocacy Support

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

## STATE LIAISONS IN ACTION

**Massachusetts** – Dr. Anna Whelan provided [oral testimony](#) in front of the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Public Health in support of expanding access to abortion care later in pregnancy.

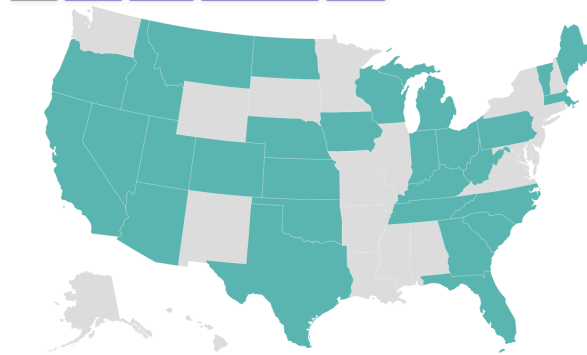
**New Jersey and Utah** – Dr. Thomas Westover and Dr. Marcela Smid were [interviewed and quoted](#) by ProPublica.

**Ohio** – Dr. David Hackney penned an [op-ed](#) for MedPage Today.

### All Advocacy Activities

Select a state to see how our members and staff have taken action in the last 12 months to advance perinatal and reproductive health.

[All Advocacy](#) [Ballot Initiatives](#) [Judicial Advocacy](#) [Legislative & Regulatory Advocacy](#) [Media Advocacy](#)



Source: Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine - Get the data - Created with Datawrapper

Have you been advocating for reproductive and perinatal health in your state? Share your work with SMFM by emailing Samantha Berg at [sberg@smfm.org](mailto:sberg@smfm.org).

## SMFM ACTIONS AND UPDATES



SMFM continues to work tirelessly to advocate for you and your patients on federal and state levels. You can see all of our advocacy efforts by visiting the [Advocacy Activities and Updates](#) and [Press Room](#) pages of our Advocacy Hub.

Since our last newsletter, we have met with federal officials, filed legal briefs, and penned or joined letters, statements, and press releases, including:

- **July 7:** Joined other leading medical professional societies and a patient in a [lawsuit](#) against HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
- **July 30:** Joined partner organizations in a [letter](#) urging Congress to eliminate the Hyde Amendment during the FY2026 appropriations process.
- **August 11:** Joined 200 organizations in a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr, urging him to defend the mission of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and preserve it in its entirety.
- **August 14:** Submitted a [letter](#) to Texas House Leadership opposing SB.6/HB.30.
- **September 2:** Submitted an individual [comment letter](#) to the Department of Veterans Affairs opposing the new proposed rule on reproductive health.
- **September 9:** Joined 30 partner organizations in a [letter](#) requesting a meeting with NIH leaders to discuss the future of federal HIV guidelines and strategies to support their maintenance at NIH.
- **September 15:** Joined the Maternal Immunization Taskforce in submitting [comments](#) highlighting the benefits of maternal immunization to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- **September 24:** Submitted a [letter](#) to the South Carolina Senate Committee on Medical Affairs in opposition to S.323

## STATE HAPPENINGS

## Perinatal health advancements

The following bills were recently enacted:

**Illinois HB 2517** requires healthcare professionals to complete implicit bias awareness training as part of their continuing education. Starting July 1, 2026, those providing maternal health services will need to complete an additional one-hour course on risk factors affecting marginalized racial or ethnic groups to address disparities in maternal mortality and enhance culturally competent care.

**North Carolina HB 546** reforms NC's Medicaid program to align with federal standards, including adjusting to federal working requirements. Also removes the sunset clause for postpartum Medicaid extension, making it permanent.

**Oregon SB 692** directs the Oregon Health authority to create a program to increase access to culturally specific and competent services during the perinatal period through grants, insurance coverage mandates, and regulatory support. The bill promotes services from doulas, lactation counselors, and health educators to improve maternal health outcomes, ensuring services are affordable and accessible without barriers like referrals or supervision.

## Celebrating abortion care wins

Three states enacted shield laws protecting healthcare providers and/or patients since our last newsletter:

**California AB 260** expands legal protections for California providers and facilities, allowing them to anonymously prescribe medication abortion to patients in order to shield them from out-of-state legal threats or disciplinary actions.

**Delaware HB 205** expands legal protections for healthcare providers who provide reproductive and other lawful healthcare services in Delaware from out-of-state legal actions, disciplinary sanctions, and insurance discrimination.

**Massachusetts SB 2543** strengthens legal protections for reproductive and gender-affirming care by safeguarding patient and provider data, limiting cooperation with out-of-state investigations, and ensuring access to emergency and protected health services. This bill also prohibits discrimination, legal penalties, or adverse actions against individuals or entities involved in such care when lawful in the Commonwealth.

## Monitoring abortion care bans and restrictions

After two special sessions, **Texas** enacted **HB 7**, which bans the manufacturing, distribution, and provision of abortion medication, and allows private individuals to sue anyone who defies this ban. Successful plaintiffs who are related to the fetus would win a minimum of \$100,000.

---

As of October 1, 2025, **19** states have abortion bans up to 18 weeks gestation: **Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.**

**12** of these states (**Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and 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](#).



## SMFM AND PARTNER RESOURCES

### SMFM Advocacy Hub



Don't forget to utilize SMFM's [Advocacy Hub](#)! This is your one-stop shop for all things advocacy, providing all the information you need about SMFM's advocacy priorities, activities and updates, and more. The Hub includes a state bill tracker that can help you monitor what is being proposed in your state, as well as an easy-to-use portal for you to request SMFM engagement and support for your advocacy efforts. You can also send your fellow SMFM members here to sign up for the [State Liaison Network](#).

### American Society for Reproductive Medicine – Just the Facts: “Restorative Reproductive Medicine” and “Ethical IVF” Are Misleading Terms That Threaten Access

As advocates for evidence-based fertility care, ASRM implores policymakers to uphold the integrity of our healthcare system by protecting access to proven treatments like IVF. This [advocacy resource](#) is designed to help you stay vigilant against misleading terminology, such as “*Restorative Reproductive Medicine*” (RRM) and “*Ethical IVF*,” which can be used to promote ideologically driven restrictions that could limit patient care.

### Physicians for Reproductive Health – Resources for Providers to Prepare for ICE Presence at Health Care Facilities

Under the Trump Administration, there has been a dramatic increase in immigration enforcement alongside a rise in anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiment. Since January 21, 2025, DHS published a statement regarding the “protected areas policy” saying ICE and CBP are no longer guided to avoid enforcement actions in or near hospitals, clinics, schools, places of worship, or other sensitive locations. Health care settings are now vulnerable to immigration enforcement actions. [These resources are designed with preparation in mind.](#)

## WHAT WE'RE READING

[“Abortions reported later in pregnancy following statewide bans,”](#) *Contemporary OB/GYN*

[“Confusing abortion bans hurt patients. But there’s a cost to making them clearer.”](#) *Vox*

[“Hundreds of US women charged with pregnancy-related crimes since fall of Roe,”](#) *The Guardian*

[“Medicaid patients lose quick access to basic care after Planned Parenthood cuts and closures,”](#) *News From The States*

[“More infants are dying in states with restrictive abortion laws,”](#) *AZ Mirror*

[“RFK Jr. launches FDA review of abortion pill,”](#) *ABC News*

[“Rural hospitals often scrap labor and delivery services after mergers, study finds,”](#) *Stateline*

[“Trump ties autism to Tylenol use in pregnancy despite inconclusive scientific evidence,”](#) *New From The States*

[“US hospitals see stark decline of obstetric services, study shows,”](#) *Stateline*

["We Want to Save This Investment": Advocates Race to Secure Maternal Health Funding Before It Runs Out," ProPublica](#)

["What the Tylenol-Autism Discussion Says About Communicating Evolving Science," MedPage Today](#)

[Were you forwarded this email?](#)  
[Sign up for the State Liaison Network today!](#)

### Stay Connected



Please share any feedback or items for future newsletters directly with Samantha Berg, SMFM's State Advocacy Manager ([\*sberg@smfm.org\*](mailto:sberg@smfm.org))

[Update Account Information](#)

[Unsubscribe from the State Liaison Network](#)

Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
PO Box 420016, Washington, DC 20042-0016