



THE NETWORK NEWSLETTER



A Health Policy and Advocacy Update - September 2022

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, we cover how members have taken action to support abortion access; state and federal updates; action opportunities and the [next SLN webinar](#); and both external and internal materials to read, including tools from our partners.

We are also pleased to introduce Samantha Berg, our new Manager, State Advocacy. If you have questions or are interested in learning more about advocacy opportunities in your state, you can email her directly at sberg@smfm.org.



SLN IN ACTION

Massachusetts – In July, SLN members **Dr. Chloe Zera** and **Dr. Erika Werner** spearheaded a letter to leaders in the Massachusetts Senate endorsing legislation that would further expand access to abortion care for pregnant people in the Commonwealth, as well as shield clinicians and patients from lawsuits and investigations initiated by states that have outlawed abortion care. Massachusetts Governor Baker signed the [expansive abortion protections](#) bill into law.

Michigan – On September 2, SLN member **Dr. Courtney Townsel** joined colleagues from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) in leading an [open letter](#) from Michigan clinicians to Michigan voters supporting the Reproductive Freedom for All Initiative, a ballot measure that would protect access to abortion care in the state. This letter will signal to Michiganders that their health care providers support their freedom to make reproductive health decisions.

South Carolina – On August 17, SLN member **Dr. Amy Crockett** provided testimony to the South Carolina Senate Medical Affairs Committee in opposition to [Senate Bill 1](#), a six-week abortion ban, as well as further restrictions to abortion. You can watch a recording of the hearing, including Dr. Crockett's testimony, [here](#).

On the same day, the South Carolina Supreme Court [unanimously voted](#) to temporarily block the six-week ban. In their ruling, they cited language in the state constitution that protects individuals from "unreasonable invasions of privacy."

If you need assistance on an advocacy or public health initiative, please contact Samantha Berg, Manager, State Advocacy (sberg@smfm.org). We can help you with letter writing, testimony, or any other requests.

OTHER SMFM ACTIONS



SMFM joined partnering organizations to file [amicus briefs](#) opposing abortion bans in **Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio, South Carolina, and West Virginia**.

We also joined partners in briefs filed in **Idaho** and **Texas** underscoring the importance of federal law requiring clinicians to provide stabilizing medical care, including abortion care, to patients experiencing medical emergencies.

STATE HAPPENINGS

CELEBRATING ABORTION ACCESS WINS

On September 7, a **Michigan** judge [declared the state's 1931 abortion ban unconstitutional](#), keeping abortion legal in the state. The law, which only included exceptions for the life of the pregnant person, would have criminalized abortion and threatened providers with felony charges.

On August 2, an overwhelming majority of **Kansas voters – nearly 60% – upheld abortion rights** and voted “no” on a ballot question that would have amended the Kansas Constitution to state that there is no state constitutional right to abortion.

Beginning September 1, **Illinois increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for abortion** services by 20%. Governor Pritzker also announced that Illinois will provide an additional \$2 million in grants for clinicians offering family planning services.

MONITORING ABORTION BANS

At least 17 states have abortion bans up to 20 weeks gestation currently or soon to be in effect: **Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah**.

11 of these states (**Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas**) have total bans.

In 9 states, courts are determining if existing or new bans can take effect: **Arizona, Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming**.

For up to date information on state abortion policies, see resources from [Abortion Finder](#), [Guttmacher Institute](#), and the [New York Times](#).

FEDERAL HAPPENINGS

ADDITIONAL STATES EXTEND POSTPARTUM MEDICAID COVERAGE

The Biden Administration continues to approve state requests to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12 months. On September 8, the Administration announced that **Indiana** and **West Virginia** will now provide a full year of Medicaid coverage after delivery. These two states join **California; Connecticut; Florida; Hawaii; Illinois; Kansas; Kentucky; Louisiana; Maine;**

[Maryland](#); [Massachusetts](#); [Michigan](#); [Minnesota](#); [New Jersey](#); [New Mexico](#); [Ohio](#); [Oregon](#); [South Carolina](#); [Tennessee](#); [Virginia](#); [Washington state](#); and [Washington, D.C.](#) in providing this critical coverage to new mothers. For the latest information on the status of postpartum Medicaid coverage in your state, check out [Kaiser Family Foundation's Tracker](#). SMFM stands ready to work with you on efforts to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage in your state.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION EXPLORES USING MEDICAID WAIVERS TO PROTECT ABORTION ACCESS

Since the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* case, the Biden Administration has [attempted to use its federal authority to protect access to abortion care](#). In August, the Administration [announced plans](#) to work with states with permissive abortion policies to submit 1115 Medicaid waivers to help increase access to care for women from states where reproductive rights are under attack. If you live in a state with laws and policies that protect access to abortion care, SMFM would be happy to connect with you to discuss an advocacy strategy to encourage your state's policymakers to pursue this opportunity.

TAKE ACTION

SHARE YOUR ABORTION STORY

If you are a provider of abortion care, someone who has had an abortion, or someone who has witnessed the inequity in access to abortion care, please share your story with SMFM. Sharing your story is extremely important and necessary to destigmatize abortion care, uplift others who share a similar experience, and take back the abortion narrative.

[Use this form to share your story](#) and use your voice to advocate for the protection and expansion of abortion care across the United States.

WRITE A BLOG POST

Consider sharing your story about why access to comprehensive reproductive health is so important to your patients via the [Reproductive Health Project's blog](#). Contact RHProject@smfm.org to contribute or learn more.

SLN WEBINAR SERIES



SLN WEBINAR
CLINICIANS AS ADVOCATES:
STATE BALLOT INITIATIVES
ON ABORTION



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2022
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM ET

REGISTER HERE

You are invited to the next SLN webinar, ***Clinicians as Advocates: State Ballot Initiatives on Abortion***, on Tuesday September 27 from 12:00 to 1:15pm ET.

The webinar will provide a history of efforts to restrict or expand access to abortion care through ballot initiatives, highlight upcoming ballot initiatives, and share how clinicians are uniquely poised to support these campaigns.

Attendees will be directed to current campaigns and receive follow-up materials to support their advocacy.

SMFM AND PARTNER RESOURCES

SMFM: [Clinical Considerations for Management of Severe Complications when Abortion Care is Restricted](#)

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): [Understanding and Navigating Medical Emergency Exceptions in Abortion Bans and Restrictions](#)

Center for Reproductive Rights: [Glossary: Abortion Bans, Restrictions and Protections](#)

National Advocates for Pregnant Women:

- Issue Brief: [When Fetuses Gain Personhood: Understanding the Impact on IVF, Contraception, Medical Treatment, Criminal Law, Child Support, and Beyond](#)
- Guidelines: [Confronting Pregnancy Criminalization: A Practical Guide for Healthcare Providers, Lawyers, Medical Examiners, Child Welfare, and Policymakers](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING

[“1 in 3 American women have already lost abortion access. More restrictive laws are coming,”](#) *The Washington Post*

[“American Motherhood,”](#) *The Atlantic*

[“A challenge for antiabortion states: Doctors reluctant to work there,”](#) *The Washington Post*

[“An OB/GYN Explains Tennessee’s Upcoming Abortion Ban,”](#) *The Chattanooga.com*

[“I’m Carrying This Baby Just to Bury It’: The Struggle to Decode Abortion Laws,”](#) *The New York Times*

[“Kansas was just the beginning: Abortion-rights activists turn to states – and they’re winning,”](#) *Salon*

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

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be a member of the Network, please email Anna Hall, SMFM's Advocacy and Communications

Coordinator (ahall@smfm.org).

STAY CONNECTED

