Legislative Advocacy and You How to make a difference in our Crazy World.

Ellen M Joyce, MD, FACOG

Disclosures

- I have no financial disclosures

Objectives

- To identify the reasons to advocate
- To learn how the legislative process works
- To identify ways to advocate
- Highlight the upcoming legislative session and the work that needs to be done
- To highlight the national and the local legislatures and how to contact them

Physicians As Advocates

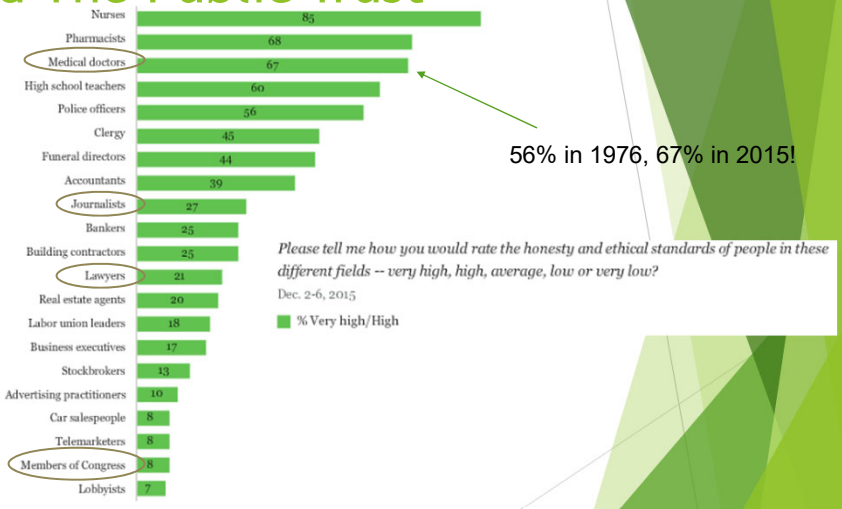
What is advocacy

- To advocate is to work to exact change
- In your family
- In your workplace
- At your school
- At the state level
- At the national level

Why do it?
We are all so busy

- Non scientific non medical laws are at best annoying at worst dangerous
- Having to work against the evidence adds to our moral injury and to our burnout
- Delivering medical care we affect one patient at a time
- Passing meaningful legislation we can affect thousands of patients

Physicians And The Public Trust

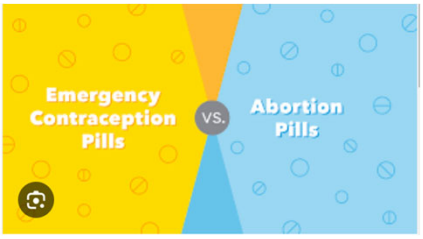


56% in 1976, 67% in 2015!

Adapted from www.gallup.com

Need for Public Education

Misinformation

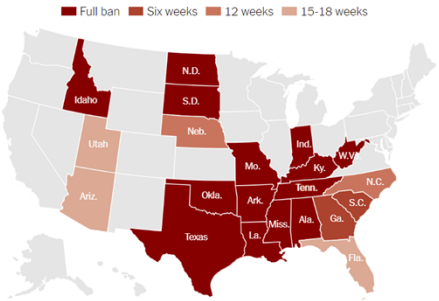


Anti-Vaccine

The Fall of Roe

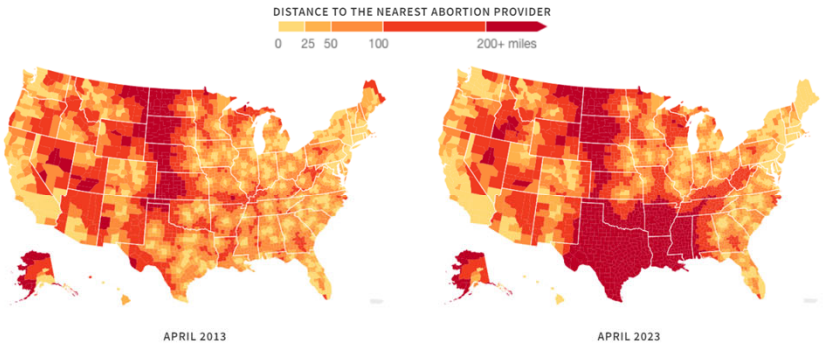
Tracking Abortion Bans Across the Country

By The New York Times Updated Oct. 24, 11:45 A.M. ET



Abortion access in the U.S., 2013 vs. 2023

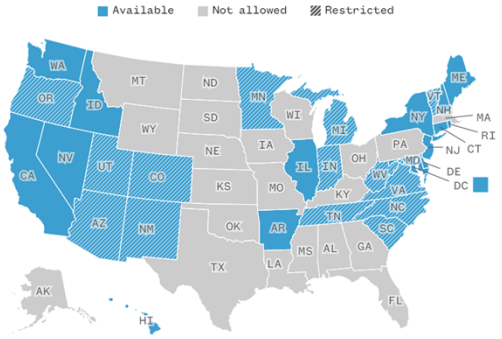
The number of Americans who live more than 200 miles from a clinic or hospital that provides abortions dramatically grew in the past decade.



Source: Myers Abortion Facility Database. Travel distances are calculated from a county's population center, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, to the nearest facility providing abortions.

Where pharmacists can prescribe contraceptives

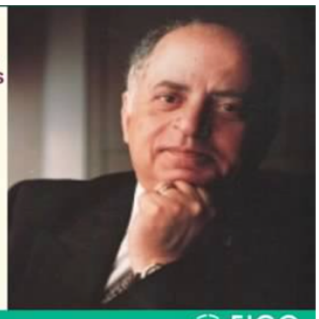
In 29 states and Washington, D.C., people can get contraceptives like birth control pills and patches from a pharmacist without a doctor's prescription.



"Mothers are not dying because of diseases we cannot prevent or treat. They are still dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving.

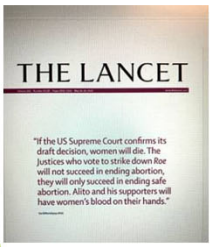
I made this observation many years ago, and sadly it remains a glaring, inconvenient truth."

Professor Mahmoud F Fathalla,
FIGO Past President 1994-1997



the Global Voice for Women's Health

FIGO



"These dangerous bills would let politicians — not women and families — dictate health care decisions at the expense of our patients' ability to access safe care in our state. Equally terrifying, they would impose severe penalties on doctors, including sending providers to prison for up to five years time. **We, as doctors, should not be punished for helping women.** And I am shocked that we need to say that in 2020."

DR. ELLEN JOYCE
Chair of the New Hampshire section of the
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

How to begin

- New Hampshire
- Legislature 400 house members, you probably have 3 and 24 state senators
- https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/wml.aspx
- US mail: good old snail mail is very effective
- Phone call: takes up staff time, they notice if they get a ton of calls on a particular bill or issue
- Email: good not great but sometimes it gets it done

The NH House is the third largest legislative body in the world

- The current makeup of the NH house:
- Republican: 198
- Democrat: 196
- Independent: 3
- Vacant: 3
- Every bill gets a full house vote regardless of what the committee that heard the bill decides

NH House Remote Sign In Sheet

Select Date of the Hearing

<	February 2021					>
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Select the Committee

House Education

Choose the Bill

1:15 pm - HB20

I am: A Member of the Public

I'm Representing: Myself

Indicate Your Position on this Bill

I Support this Bill I Oppose this Bill I'm neutral on this Bill

Testify

I Wish to Speak on this Bill

Your Selection

Date: 2/2/2021
Committee: House Education
Legislation: 1:15 pm - HB20
I Am: A Member of the Public

New Hampshire Senate

- Current makeup
- Republicans: 14
- Democrats: 10
- Our senator is Suzanne Prentiss democrat and a reproductive health/rights champion. Helped pass the Momnibus last year. Helped with menstrual equity and anti-shackling law

Executive Council

- The 5 executive counselors all represent 1/5 of the population
- Executive Councilors serve as watchdogs of the state treasury to ensure state departments do not spend more than was authorized by the legislature, nor allocate funds for items or services which the legislature has not sanctioned.
- Makeup is currently 4 republicans and 1 democrat
- This Executive Council has voted to defund planned parenthood and equality multiple times.

Are you an expert? Are you passionate about a subject?

- Reach out to the legislator who is sponsoring the bill or the organization who is opposing the bill
- Offer to right a letter to the editor, an op-ed, testify at a committee meeting
- If you read from a statement have it printed on your letterhead with your contact information. The committee may ask you to leave it for them.
- Attend a committee meeting and sign in and oppose or support the proposal

New Hampshire Medical Society Legislative Committee

- Discuss all bills that might be related to medicine
- Multidisciplinary
- Full time lobbyist: Ava Hawkes ava.hawkes@nhms.org
- They are always looking for doctors to get involved.
- They are putting together a reproductive rights task force which will be a list of doctors who want to testify or write testimony for various reproductive issues.

New Hampshire Reproductive Rights Coalition

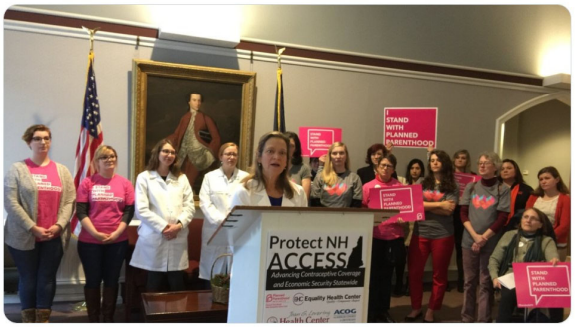
- This is a collection of stake holders in the state including:
- ACOG
- ACLU
- NHMS
- PPNE
- Elected officials
- NH Young Dems
- This coalition sends around emails and has meetings and gets everyone involved in the various bills.
- Email Kayla Montgomery to get on this list: Kayla.Montgomery@ppnne.org

Give a press conference not as difficult as you think

You Retweeted

Planned Parenthood @PPNHAF · 4h

Grateful to have the support of Dr. Ellen Joyce, an OB/GYN & Chair of ACOG in #NH, who served on the bipartisan commission that unanimously endorsed #SB421. @AGOGAction #Fight4ACCESS #nhpolitics



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Maine Legislature

- 131st Legislature Makeup:
- 186 Legislators; 131st Maine Legislature
  - 22 D, 13 R in Senate
  - 80 D, 68 R, 2 Independents, & 1 Vacancy in House
- 151 members of the House of Representatives, each representing ±8,800 citizens
- 35 Senators, each representing ±38,000 citizens
- All elected every 2 years for a maximum of 4 consecutive terms.
- Governor: elected every 4 years for a maximum of 2 terms
- Impact of term limit & MCEA public campaign financing laws

Maine Medical Association priorities for 2024

- State Issues
- Reducing administrative burden by improving the Prior Authorization Process (L.D.796), enforcing current law, and establishing a provider complaint process.
- Reducing youth tobacco use by banning the sale of flavored tobacco.
- Expanding access to behavioral and mental health services.
- Protecting health data.
- Supporting and expanding the rural healthcare workforce in Maine.
- Increasing access to affordable and quality health care.
- Improving access to Substance Use Treatment.

Maine ACOG section legislative priorities

- LD 780 Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy this is a powerful way to send this issue to the voters.
- Working on how to best address the birthing units closing in the state
- Integrating the midwives into the medical system by instituting some outcomes measures protocols to improve existing care models
- ACOG section chair for Maine: Romeo Lucas, DO: romeolucas@gmail.com
- Dr. Lucas invites any Maine provider to contact him

Vermont Legislature

- The General Assembly is a bicameral legislature, consisting of the 150-member Vermont House of Representatives and the 30-member Vermont Senate.
- Members of the House are elected by single and two-member districts. 68 districts choose one member, and 41 choose two, with the term of service being two years.

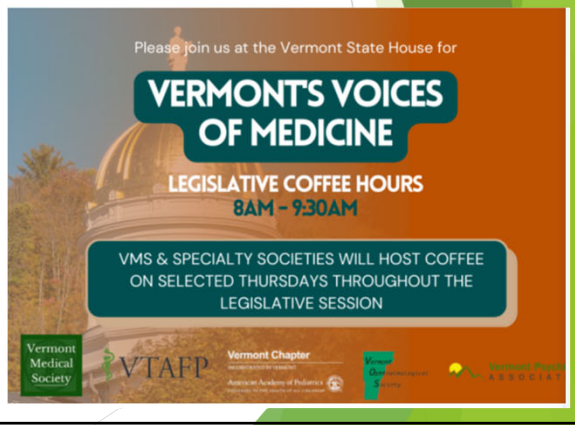
Vermont (oh Vermont we love you so)

- Passed a constitutional amendment protecting reproductive autonomy (added language to the constitution stating that an “individual’s right to personal reproductive autonomy is central to liberty and dignity to determine one’s own life course”
- Dr. Lauren MacAfee is Vermont ACOG legislative chair
- Lauren.Macafee@uvmhealth.org

Vermont Medical Society

"Too many work hours. Too much administrative work after a 50-hour clinical week. I am a director of a clinical service and have no administrative time. All I do is put out fires and do not improve anything."

"The overall morale of physicians is as low as I ever seen it."



Vermont Medical Society's legislative priorities 2024

What Can the Vermont Legislature Do?

Increase Practice Sustainability

- Continue to sustainably fund the Medicaid professional fee schedules & adjust for inflation
- Fund Blueprint direct investment in primary care practices (Act 51)
- Increase proportion of health care dollars going to primary care services (H. 220)

Reduce Administrative Burdens

- Reduce/streamline the prior authorization approval process (H. 220)
- Reduce paperwork headaches required to comply with payer billing reviews
- Require consistency in payer policies for audio-only telehealth services

Ensure a Strong Workforce

- Provide ongoing funding for primary care scholarships, loan repayment, residency (Act 78)
- Simplify medical licensure process (Act 4)
- Meet statewide economic development needs like housing & childcare

Go to DC and lobby

Congressional Leadership Conference

Forecasting the next year

- Wish list:
- Repeal criminal penalties from 24 week abortion ban
- Medicaid funds to pay for abortion care
- Science based sex education in public schools
- Suggestions?

Finding Time

Activity	Estimated Time
Voting	10 min - one day
Signing a petition	One minute
Writing email to legislator	1 - 15 minutes
Calling your legislator	5 - 10 minutes
Writing a letter to the editor	15 - 60 minutes
Testifying	Half - whole day

Advocacy Resources

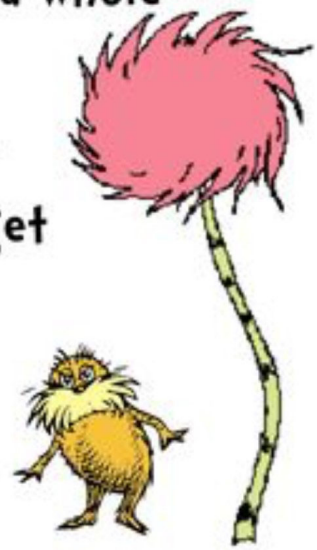
- Physicians for Reproductive Health
  - www.prh.org
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
  - www.acog.org/Advocacy
- Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
  - www.arhp.org/Policy-and-Advocacy
- National Abortion Federation
  - www.prochoice.org/get_involved/activistkit.html
- Reproductive Health Access Project
  - www.reproductiveaccess.org/advocacy/

Advocacy Resources

- National Medical Organizations
  - (AAFP, AAP, ACP, AMA, SAHM, etc.)
- National Physicians Alliance
  - www.npalliance.org
- Doctors for America
  - www.drsforamerica.org
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
  - www.psr.org

Don’t get discouraged!!!

Unless someone like
you cares a whole
awful lot,
nothing is
going to get
better.
It's not.



Summary-baby steps

- Have a plan to vote: take the day off, get an absentee ballot,
- Choose one organization or one legislator you will follow or sign up for their email
- Write, call or email a legislator about a particular bill, law or topic

Summary-I am ready to do more

- Stay informed thru your state's Medical Society or your professional organization
- Consider attending the state's or your professional association's legislative committee meeting
- Attend a legislative committee hearing, sign in and oppose or support the bill.
- Attend a rally, meet other like minded activists

Summary-I want to Lobby!!!

- Attend the Congressional Leadership Conference thru ACOG, early March or AWONN's in April
- You will spend 2 days learning about a subject, then a day lobbying on Capital Hill
- Testify at a committee meeting to support or oppose a bill.
- Serve on a statewide commission or a state committee such as the Maternal Mortality Committee

Summary-I am ready for the big time!

- Apply for the Leadership Training Academy with Physicians for Reproductive Health
- Apply for the Gelhaus/McCain Fellowship thru ACOG
- Attend the Legislative Committee at your medical society all thru the legislative session
- Become a member of the NH Reproductive Rights Coalition.
- Run for office in ACOG
- Run for legislature!