



The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

Idaho Section

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Idaho abortion laws represent dangerous, ill-advised legislative interference

Medically unjustified regulations force clinicians to practice medicine counter to the best available evidence, their professional judgment, and their ethical obligation to provide high quality patient care. Leading medical organizations have consistently objected to inappropriate interference in the patient-clinician relationship as dangerous and ill-advised. Legislative interference affects health care practitioners across the spectrum of care, not just obstetrician-gynecologists. Singling out medical procedures, defying current well-established medical practice and scientific facts, and dictating the care a clinician can or cannot provide sets a dangerous precedent for the practice of medicine.

Idaho abortion laws indefensibly jeopardize patient health

We are deeply alarmed by the medical emergency language that attempts to further confuse and impede the provision of care. Already the exception in current law for emergent care is woefully insufficient, by requiring clinicians to “wait and see” if a condition deteriorates so severely that an abortion becomes immediately necessary. This language, by removing a physician’s ability to exercise their good faith medical judgment, will further tie the hands of health care professionals, forcing them to make an untenable choice: break the law or deny needed care to patients whose pregnancies threaten their health.

Medical emergency and “health” exceptions fail to account for high-risk pregnancies and many situations where a medical condition poses health risks but is not yet immediately life-threatening. Physicians cannot always predict what course medical conditions or complications will take or how quickly they may progress to severe injury or even death. In the case of abortion bans at six weeks, potentially life-threatening conditions may not yet have manifested. Patients should be able to trust that their doctor can give them options for their health care that is based on their medical expertise, not the confines of a vague legal language, under threat of legal action.

Idaho abortion laws create a coercive environment for patients and clinicians

These laws, by creating a pathway for litigation to be used as intimidation, irreparably compromise the integrity of the patient-physician relationship. These are medical determinations that must be in the hands of patients and their physicians, made without the specter of baseless lawsuits. These laws threaten to further deter physicians in our state from providing patients with the medical care that they need, at the expense of the health of our state’s women, families, and communities.

Shared decision making between patients and their health care providers must continue to rely on science, best practices, and individual needs. ACOG Idaho will continue to oppose legislation that restricts access to reproductive health care and seeks to punish physicians providing compassionate, evidence-based care.