Impacts of abortion bans on pregnancy-related care

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Before Dobbs, maternal mortality was higher in states likely to ban or restrict abortion.

Maternal deaths per 100,000 births, 2018-2020

Abortion-restriction states

Abortion-access states

Data: CDC, 2021
Image Source: E. DeClerque, et al 2022
Exceptions vary across states

- Of the 17 states with bans on abortion at 15 weeks or less:
  - All have life exceptions
  - 11 have health exceptions
  - 3 have exceptions for life-limiting fetal anomalies
- The language used in these bans is often vague and not consistent with medical terminology.

Source: KFF, 2023
Abortion bans have compromised evidence-based care for pregnant patients

- Clinicians in states with abortion bans have found it difficult to provide evidence-based care for pregnant patients experiencing:
  - obstetric complications, such as preterm prelabor rupture of membranes
  - medical conditions that make continuing pregnancy dangerous
  - severe fetal diagnoses
  - demise of a twin pregnancy
  - ectopic pregnancy, including pregnancies implanted in cesarean section scars
  - early miscarriage
Care Post-Roe Study

- Offers an online platform where health care providers can anonymously submit descriptions of care that deviated from the usual standard due to laws restricting abortion that went into effect after *Dobbs*.

- 50 submissions received between September 29, 2022 and March 30, 2023.

- Patients in these narratives lived in one of 14 states that had banned or restricted abortion following *Dobbs*.

- Data collection is ongoing.

Source: Grossman et al, 2023
Patients have to be sicker to get care

She was admitted [to the ICU] from the ER with severe sepsis…and bacteremia. Her fetus delivers; she is able to hold [the fetus]. We try every medical protocol we can find to help her placenta deliver; none are successful…

The anesthesiologist cries on the phone when discussing the case with me—if the patient needs to be intubated, no one thinks she will make it out of the [operating room]. I do a D&C [dilation & curettage]… [and she] bleeds from everywhere.

She asks me: could she or I go to jail for this? Or did this count as life threatening yet?

Source: Grossman et al, 2023
Patients feel lost and scared

When you already have received news like that and can barely function, the thought of then having to do your own investigating to determine where to get this medical care and to arrange going out of state feels additionally overwhelming.

Texas patient who received a fatal fetal diagnosis

Source: Arey et al, 2022
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Care Post Roe
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