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Policy Statement on the Purported Link Between Abortion and Breast Cancer

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health (PRCH) affirms that there is no medical basis for the claim that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer. This position, which is shared by the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society, is based on a thorough review of the relevant body of research. Among studies that show abortion to be associated with a higher incidence of breast cancer, most are unreliable due to recall bias and other methodological flaws. By contrast, studies that were designed to avoid such biases show no relationship. The claim that abortion causes breast cancer is misleading and scientifically inaccurate.

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health objects to laws that require abortion providers to warn women of the potential risk of breast cancer. This is not informed consent—this is misinformed consent, requiring physicians to make inaccurate and misleading statements to their patients. These mandates are particularly nefarious because they prevent physicians from open and honest dialogue with patients. Such laws also give a government stamp of approval to false information. When health risks are found to be associated with a particular treatment or procedure, it is clearly the duty of physicians to report these risks to patients. However, research shows that there is no association between abortion and breast cancer. It is irresponsible for politicians to develop public policy that is based upon false medical allegations. Physicians and other health care practitioners have the ethical obligation to provide scientifically-based, medically-accurate information to patients.