



The Abortion Provider's Declaration of Rights

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that the people of this country entrust their health and well-being to doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals; that among these professionals are those who provide abortion, a safe, legal medical procedure; that medical professionals who perform abortions deserve the same freedoms as those professionals who do not, just as patients who have abortions should be given the same respect as those who do not.

Despite the equal intrinsic value of all medical professionals and all patients, the governments of many states and of this entire nation have passed laws and enacted policies that interfere with abortion providers' ability to care for their patients, laws and policies that have no parallel in any other area of medicine. Moreover, some medical institutions have resisted the incorporation of abortion into their training and services. And some citizens of this country have turned their personal opposition to abortion into a vendetta against the medical professionals who offer this service and the patients who receive it, occasionally choosing arson, murder, and other illegal acts to show disapproval. All of these pressures, and others not enumerated here, inflict unjust punishment on abortion providers. And when providers can't help patients, women and families suffer.

We therefore declare the rights of the abortion provider.

Abortion providers, their families, and their co-workers have the right to exist free of violence, harassment, and discrimination. Performing a legal, safe medical procedure should not turn a medical professional into a target.

Abortion providers have the right to give patients complete, medically accurate information about the abortion procedure. They should not be required by law to misinform their patients—for example, by stating (falsely) that abortions cause breast cancer or endanger future fertility—or present a particular moral interpretation of the abortion procedure.

Abortion providers have the right to perform an abortion after explaining the procedure and obtaining the patient's consent. There is no medical reason for the woman to wait 24 hours, 48 hours, or any other length of time between consent and the abortion procedure as dictated by some state laws.

Abortion providers have the right to choose the tools and techniques that are best for a particular abortion procedure and the patient's needs. The law should not dictate courses of treatment that are not supported by medical evidence. Nor should the law require the abortion provider to add medically unnecessary steps to the abortion procedure, processes that cause delays and increase the risks for the patient.

Abortion providers have the right to give patients the treatment they need, unencumbered by abortion-only restrictions and bans in public and private insurance coverage. Likewise, insurers should stop charging providers higher rates for malpractice coverage; abortion providers deserve rates commensurate with the fees paid by providers of other comparable, safe, legal medical procedures.

Abortion providers have the right to continue their training and conduct research in abortion techniques. Medical students and residents in relevant specialties have the right to learn about abortion in order to decide whether to become abortion providers.

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health stands in support of abortion providers and their right to give their patients safe, compassionate, medically sound abortion care. Join us by adding your name to this declaration of rights at www.prch.org.