

# How to advocate in a post-*Roe* world, no matter your zip code

After the repeal of *Roe*, ObGyns in the United States are scrambling not only to provide care to their patients but also to advocate for them. The authors outline how to get involved online and in-person, providing resources to aid in the task.

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For many, the recent Supreme Court decision in the *Dobbs v Jackson* case that removed the constitutional right to an abortion has introduced outrage, fear, and confusion throughout the country. While the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) clearly has established that abortion is essential health care and has published resources regarding the issue ([www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential](http://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential)), and many providers know what to do medically, they do not know what they can do legally. In a country where 45% of pregnancies are unplanned and 25% of women will access abortion services in their lifetime, this decision will completely change the landscape of providing and receiving abortion care. This decision will affect every provider and their patients and will affect them differ-

ently in each state. The country likely will be divided into 24 destination states that will protect the right to abortion and another 26 states that have or will soon ban abortion or severely restrict access to it.

Regardless of the state you practice in, it is clear that our voices, actions, and advocacy are essential during these challenging times. It can feel difficult to find ways to advocate, especially if you are in a state or have an employer that supports anti-abortion legislation or has been silent after the *Dobbs* decision was released. We have created a guide to help and encourage all ObGyn providers to find ways to advocate, no matter their zip code.

expensive, and travel, child care, and time off of work add to the costs of the procedure itself, making access to abortion care financially out of reach for some. There are many well-established abortion funds throughout the country; consider donating to one of them or organizing a fundraiser in your community. Go to [abortionfunds.org/funds](http://abortionfunds.org/funds) to find an abortion fund that will support patients in your community, or donate generally to support them all.



## 1. Donate

Many of our patients will need to travel out of state to seek abortion care. The cost of abortion care can be

## 2. Save your stories

We already are hearing the devastating impact abortion bans have on patient care around the country. If you had to deny or delay care because of the new legal landscape surrounding abortion, write down or record the experience. Your stories can be critical in discussing the impact of legislation. If you choose

*The authors report no financial relationships relevant to this article.*

doi: 10.12788/obgm.0240

to share on social media, ask the involved patients if they are comfortable with their story being shared online (as long as their identity is protected).



### 3. Talk about it

Talking about abortion is a critical step in destigmatizing it and supporting our patients as well as our field. These conversations can be challenging, but ACOG has provided an important guide that includes key phrases and statements to help shape the conversation and avoid polarizing language (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/come-prepared>). This guide also can be helpful to keep in mind when talking to members of the media.



### 4. Write about it

There are many opportunities to write about the impact of the *Dobbs* decision, especially locally. As a clinician and trusted member of the community, you can uniquely share your and your patients' experiences. Your article does not have to appear in a major publication; you can still have an important impact in your local paper. See resources on how to write an op-ed and letter to the editor (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/connect-in-your-community/legislative-rx-op-eds-and-letters-to-the-editor>).



### 5. Teach about it

These legislative changes uniquely impact our ObGyn residents; 44% of residents likely will be in a training program in a state that will ban or severely restrict abortion access. Abortion is health care, and a vast majority of our residents could graduate without important skills to save lives. As we strategize to ensure all ObGyn residents are able to receive this important training, work on incorporating an advocacy curriculum into your residents' educational experience. Teaching about how to advocate is an important skill for supporting our patients and ensuring critical health policy. ACOG has published guides focused on education and training ([www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/education-and-training](http://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/education-and-training)). We also have included our own medical center's advocacy curriculum ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1STxLzE0j55mIDeBF0\\_wZbo9OQryAcs6RpfZ47Mwfs4I/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1STxLzE0j55mIDeBF0_wZbo9OQryAcs6RpfZ47Mwfs4I/edit)).



### 6. Get involved and seek out allies

It's important that ObGyns be at the table for all discussions surrounding abortion care and reproductive health. Join hospital committees and help influence policy within your own institution. Refer back to those abortion talking points—this will help in some of these challenging conversations.



### 7. Get on social media

Using social media can be a powerful tool for advocacy. You can help elevate issues and encourage others to get active as well. Using a common hashtag, such as #AbortionisHealthcare, on different platforms can help connect you to other advocates. Share simple and important graphics provided by ACOG on important topics in our field (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/advocate-in-your-state/social-media>) and review ACOG's recommendation for professionalism in social media (<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2019/10/professional-use-of-digital-and-social-media>).



### 8. Get active locally

We have seen the introduction of hundreds of bills in states around the country not only on abortion but also on other legislation that directly impacts the care we provide. It is critical that we get involved in advocating for important reproductive health legislation and against bills that cause harm and interfere with the doctor-patient relationship. Stay up to date on legislative issues with your local ACOG and medical chapters (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/advocate-in-your-state>). Consider testifying at your State house, providing written or oral testimony. Connect with ACOG or your

state medical chapter to help with talking points!



### 9. Read up

There have been many new policies at the federal level that could impact the care you provide. Take some time to read up on these new changes. Patients also may ask you about self-managed abortion. There are guides and resources (<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/practice>

-management) for patients that may seek medication online, and we want to ensure that patients have the resources to make informed decisions.



### 10. Hit the Capitol

Consider making time to come to the annual Congressional Leadership Conference in Washington, DC (<https://www.acog.org/education-and-events/meetings/acog-congressional-leadership>

-conference), or other advocacy events offered through the American Medical Association or other sub-specialty organizations. When we all come together as an organization, a field, and a community, it sends a powerful message that we are standing up together for our patients and our colleagues.

### Make a difference

There is no advocacy too big or too small. It is critical that we continue to use our voices and our platforms to stand up for health care and access to critical services, including abortion care. ●