

# News From The States

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TODAY

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By Kelcie Moseley-Morris and Elisha Brown



*Nearly 30% of family medicine residency programs are in states that ban or significantly restrict abortion, according to a new study.  
(Getty Images)*

Fallout from the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision extends beyond the medical field of obstetrics. Researchers say the patchwork of abortion legislation across the nation has affected family physicians, too.

A new study found that **29% of accredited family medicine residency programs are in states with abortion restrictions.**

Dr. Christine Dehlendorf, one of the study's researchers, recently spoke with States Newsroom about the post-*Dobbs* implications for family medicine. The interview has been edited and condensed.

## **States Newsroom: Why did you think it was important to conduct this study?**

**Dr. Christine Dehlendorf:** We really just wanted to be descriptive about what the reality was. It was less than what was seen in previous analyses of OB residencies (which showed about 45% were in ban or heavily restricted states), but that was based on the assumptions of what bans would look like post-Dobbs. It is an evolving map — we know the abortion policy landscape is changing on a daily, weekly, monthly basis, so this is a moment in time that tells us already a substantial portion of residents are having their training influenced.

The residents that are in those programs are not going to have access to comprehensive reproductive health training because they're not experiencing it within their state context. They cannot see abortions, cannot perform them, cannot learn how to care for patients after abortions in the same way they would be able to if they were working in a state where abortion was unrestricted.

## **SN: Who might be affected the most by this lack of training?**

**Dehlendorf:** We know that family physicians provide care in areas where there are no other health care professionals, and they are the safety net for underserved communities, rural or urban, where there is no access to specialty care. Those providers need to be able to provide the full scope practice of family medicine, including the full scope of reproductive health care. Those are the communities that are most likely to be impacted.

## **SN: What can be done to help support those training opportunities?**

**Dehlendorf:** From an educational lens, people in states with abortion access funding training opportunities for people in states without it is something that is absolutely essential.

## **SN: What other implications might this have on family medicine?**

**Dehlendorf:** Prior to Dobbs, there was a lack of recognition of the critical role that abortion access played in many aspects of our medical institutions and health care system, and that includes the fact that we prescribe medications that can cause birth defects with the knowledge that abortion could be available to the patient if needed. There have been cases of people being denied those medications because access is not available.

All of those things are affecting our lives and health. It's multi-faceted, and we're just beginning to see the impacts that are going to influence the system, and how it will fail to meet people's needs in places where abortion is restricted.

**THE BEAT** *States Newsroom coverage*

## **Kentucky woman drops abortion lawsuit**



*A Planned Parenthood clinic in Louisville.  
(Deborah Yetter/Kentucky Lantern)*

Lawyers for a Kentucky woman suing officials over the state’s abortion laws asked for the case’s dismissal Monday, [Kentucky Lantern](#) reports. The state American Civil Liberties Union’s affiliate announced last week that the woman’s pregnancy — she was in the first trimester — was nonviable. Her lawsuit argued that Kentucky’s abortion bans — a trigger law prohibiting most abortions and a restriction on abortions past six weeks — violated her bodily autonomy and right to self-determination.

The groups criticized an earlier state Supreme Court ruling that determined providers lack third-party standing to challenge the abortion bans on behalf of their patients.

**A joint statement released Monday by the ACLU and Kentucky’s Planned Parenthood affiliate said they’re looking for other potential plaintiffs to join the suit:** “The court’s decision has forced Kentuckians seeking abortion to bring a lawsuit while in the middle of seeking time-sensitive health care, a daunting feat, and one that should not be necessary to reclaim the fundamental right to control their own bodies.”

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## Nearly \$20 million spent in Pennsylvania Supreme Court race

Abortion rights was a major issue in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court race this year. Spending exceeded \$19.5 million, [Pennsylvania Capital-Star](#) reports, with Democratic Judge Daniel McCaffery defeating Republican Judge Carolyn Carluccio in November. McCaffery ran on preserving reproductive rights, and groups that supported him accused Carluccio of scrubbing anti-abortion views from her campaign website.

**McCaffery benefited from nearly \$7.5 million in spending from outside groups**, Capital-Star reports. Planned Parenthood Votes spent more than \$1 million on ads opposing Carluccio. Democratic-aligned Pennsylvanians for Judicial Fairness spent about \$6.3 million in 2023, and \$2.4 million of that was spent in the weeks leading up to Election Day. McCaffery spent about \$4 million through his campaign committee, per finance records, while Carluccio's committee spent \$6.4 million. Most of that money was funded by a group affiliated with GOP mega donor Jeff Yass. Illinois-based Republican [Richard Uihlein](#) spent \$735,000 between September and October on ads attacking McCaffery.

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## Arkansas gives \$1 million grant to crisis pregnancy centers

A taxpayer-funded \$1 million program for Arkansas' anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers will begin distributing money in January, officials said. **The state has more than 40 of the centers, which are often religiously affiliated and lack medical staff**, [Arkansas Advocate](#) reports. The Republican-controlled legislature passed a law this spring that created the grant for a second year in a row.

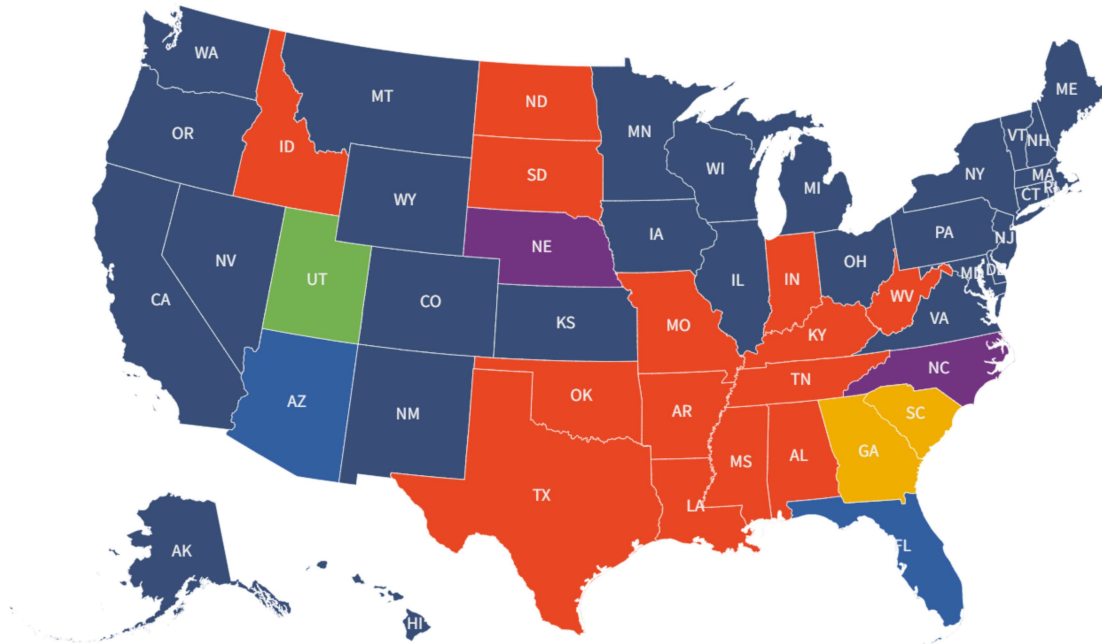
**THE PULL** *Commentary from Oklahoma*

“For a family that desperately wants a child, finding out an unborn fetus has a fatal condition is a nightmare scenario. But then discovering nobody in your home state is willing to end the pregnancy to save your life or future fertility, or prevent needless trauma, would be heart-wrenching.” — **Janelle Stecklein**, editor, [Oklahoma Voice](#)

**THE PULSE** *Reproductive rights news across the country*

- Ohio's Supreme Court dismissed state efforts to reinforce the six-week ban, citing the new constitutional amendment. ([The Guardian](#))
- A group of women-owned Texas businesses filed an amicus brief in a case urging the state to allow abortions for pregnancy complications. ([Inc](#))
- Conservatives in Arizona, Florida, Nevada and other states are actively campaigning to keep abortion off the November 2024 ballot. ([Politico](#))

**STATE BY STATE** Abortion access in the U.S.



Open this interactive map in your browser

Track state-level developments on reproductive rights anytime at [News From The States](#). Send tips and thoughts to [ebrown@statesnewsroom.com](mailto:ebrown@statesnewsroom.com), and follow her on Twitter [@elishacbrown](#).

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