

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Abortion and Women's Reproductive Health Care Rights

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2020

Approved by the Assembly, November 2020

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . ." – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

Induced abortion has been legal in the United States of America since 1973 after the Supreme Court's decision of *Roe v. Wade*. Despite ample literature evidence that first trimester abortions do not negatively impact women's mental health, several states have passed legislation that restricts access to family planning and abortion services. Restrictive abortion and contraception policies have been shown to be related to an increased risk for a variety of mental health problems and may have a negative impact on the overall health of women, including physical, emotional, and social wellbeing [1-6].

APA Position:

The American Psychiatric Association opposes all constitutional amendments, legislation, and regulations curtailing family planning and abortion services to any segment of the population.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) supports the following:

- 1. Abortion is a medical procedure for which physicians should respect the patient's right to freedom of choice. Psychiatrists may be called on as consultants to the patient or physician in those cases in which the patient or physician requests such consultation to expand mutual appreciation of motivation and consequences of such a choice.**
- 2. Freedom to act to interrupt pregnancy must be considered a mental health imperative with major social and mental health implications.**

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Collaborators: Committee on Women's Mental Health

References:

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4. Gold, R. B., & Hasstedt, K. (2016). Lessons from Texas: widespread consequences of assaults on abortion access. *Am J Public Health*. 2016 June; 106(6): 970–971.
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6. Manian, M. (2014). The consequences of abortion restrictions for women's healthcare. *Wash. & Lee L. Rev.*, 71, 1317.