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DUKE UNIVERSITY STUDENT COLLABORATION LAUNCHES NEW ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE ON EFFECTS OF RESTRICTIVE ABORTION LEGISLATION

A new collaboration between Duke University students and reproductive health care providers nationwide documents and archives the effects of legislation restricting abortion access in the wake of Roe v. Wade's reversal.

DURHAM, NC -- An [oral history archive](#) launches today sharing the preliminary results of a multidisciplinary collaboration at Duke University to track the impact of new abortion restrictions in [numerous states](#), particularly North Carolina, within the first year following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Facilitated by Drs. Beverly Gray and Jonas Swartz – both obstetricians and gynecologists at Duke Health – with oral historian Wesley Hogan, the project documents the living history of reproductive health care clinicians in the wake of the overturn of the national right to abortion.

When the Supreme Court ruled on *Dobbs*, healthcare clinicians in states that immediately restricted abortion access had their medical practices abruptly interrupted, compromising their ability to provide safe, evidence-based care to patients. Following the *Dobbs* ruling, states with abortion restrictions have seen overall worse maternal healthcare, delays in lifesaving emergency care and attrition of reproductive health care clinicians.

“We know patients will continue to seek abortions post-Dobbs, and we hope that one day patients will have their human rights restored,” said Dr. Beverly Gray. “The new abortion bans ignore evidence-based guidance for reproductive health care, and the oral history archive seeks to document the stories of clinicians as they face day-to-day challenges. We will document and track the effect of these restrictions to guide the continued evolution of healthcare delivery and clinician training.”

While there have been robust collections of patient reproductive health stories from organizations like We Testify, the Abortion Diary, and Advocates for Youth, the new multidisciplinary collaboration seeks to fill a dearth of clinician stories and qualitative data. The new Duke multidisciplinary collaboration interviewed over 40 clinicians to document their experiences navigating the unprecedented obstacles to abortion care surrounding the *Dobbs* decision. Excerpts from a subset of those interviews are publicly available, with more interviews to be conducted and added.

“As healthcare providers, we train for years to be able to use the best tools and evidence to help our patients. In many states, legislators decided to hollow out that toolbox, not because of new medical evidence, but because they disagreed with patients' choices,” added Dr. Jonas Swartz.

“This new paradigm of being unable to care for our patients, even though we know how to care for them, exposes a different dimension of the harm from these laws.”

Early findings from this work show that abortion bans contribute to worse reproductive healthcare provision, moral injury to providers, and restrict the freedom and autonomy of patients and providers alike. This impacts a majority of the country: 58% of the US population who can get pregnant live in states where there are abortion bans/restrictions. The themes of the provider testimonies range from the obstacles imposed on patients, criminalization of care, and worsening healthcare inequalities, reflecting the increasingly fragmented map of reproductive care in the country.

Ultimately, the goal of the multidisciplinary collaboration’s archive is to produce qualitative data to inform healthcare policy, law and media coverage in the continuing post-*Dobbs* era. Their site includes excerpts for public media, abortion care resources for the public, and suggested areas for action. These resources add context to broader historic, legal and medical discussions of abortion care and humanize the struggle to provide healthcare in the post-*Dobbs* era.