



Tips for Future Health-care Providers

10 things you can do to protect sexual and reproductive rights

- 1. Get trained!** The number of abortion providers in the U.S. is rapidly declining. Not all ob-gyn and family medicine residency programs fully integrate abortion training into their standard curricula, and optional training is not always available or accessible to residents. See the links in the Selected Online Resources section for information on training opportunities and continuing medical education courses for physicians and advanced practice clinicians.
- 2. Incorporate abortion care into your future practice!** Early pregnancy termination often can be carried out within an outpatient clinical setting, using appropriate technologies, which include manual vacuum aspiration (MVA), electric vacuum aspiration (EVA) and medical abortion (MA). Clinicians can provide counseling, referrals to services for legal aid, adoption and abortion services, as part of comprehensive health care.
- 3. Advocate for abortion training in your school's curricula!** Advocate for models of health-care service that incorporate choice, reproductive justice and quality and that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, affordable, accessible and youth and LGBTQ friendly.
- 4. Speak up!** Sharing information with your classmates and colleagues about the scarcity of abortion providers and its effects on women's health can help frame abortion as an essential element of comprehensive health care. Highlight how women's health and rights are compromised by the stigmatization of abortion, legal and financial barriers and a lack of available services.
- 5. Get involved with your professional association!** These organizations offer advocacy opportunities, as well as association with international medical professional organizations. As a member, you can influence your professional organization's recommendations and policy statements, which inform policymakers, health-system managers, the media and the public.
- 6. Lobby!** As a medical professional, your expertise and opinions are essential in informing and influencing policymakers who formulate domestic and foreign health policies. Find out what laws and regulations are in effect or have been proposed on state and national levels. Send letters or make calls to your legislators.
- 7. Make allies!** Work in conjunction with pro-choice law students, feminist groups, divinity students, social and economic justice activists and others working to enhance reproductive justice. Establishing common ground with nontraditional partners on issues like comprehensive sexuality education, family planning and contraceptive access, access to affordable health care, and respect for human dignity can expand the network of reproductive justice advocates. Such collaboration contributes to a solid and supportive foundation for reproductive justice.
- 8. Research!** As access to medically accurate sexuality education, contraceptive services and abortion care becomes increasingly threatened, data and illustrative examples from health-care providers can aid in assessing and improving the reproductive health climate.
- 9. Work overseas!** International experience will not only provide you with an opportunity to serve another community, but it will enrich your understanding of reproductive health and service delivery in different cultures and settings. International experience will expose you to different health-care practices, dynamics and challenges, as well as give useful insight in treating clients who may be immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers.
- 10. Work in your community!** Visit schools and community centers to speak and answer questions about reproductive health topics, including fertility, contraception, pregnancy, sexual violence, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Provide young people with resources and contacts, and inform them about peer-education and counseling opportunities, which could fulfill community service requirements now mandated by many high schools. Volunteer as an advocate for women and girls experiencing unwanted pregnancies.