



# NETWORK NEWS

The Newsletter of the Abortion Care Network | Fall 2015

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## THE VANISHING LOCAL ABORTION CLINIC

**Post-Roe v. Wade, feminists and physicians started opening locally-owned abortion care clinics in communities throughout the United States.**

This outpatient care model kept the cost of the procedure more affordable for patients who were paying out-of-pocket while also providing safe, high-quality care. These independent clinics set a new standard for all healthcare – laying the groundwork for affordable, exceptional outpatient specialty services.

Today, independent abortion care clinics – not doctors' offices, national family planning healthcare centers or hospitals – are where most people in the United States go to terminate pregnancies. And their doors are closing at alarmingly high rates.

There have been an unprecedented number of anti-choice regulations implemented since 2011, making it too expensive and/or logistically impossible for independent facilities to remain in business.

Additionally,

- insurance reimbursement rates that are lower than the cost of performing the procedure,
  - anti-choice cyber attacks,
  - a decline in demand, and
  - expansion of healthcare centers offering the abortion pill
- all contribute to the closure of local abortion care clinics.

**1.5 CLINICS  
PROVIDING ABORTIONS  
ARE CLOSING EACH  
WEEK IN AMERICA.**

Source: <http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2015/07/planned-parenthood-abortion-the-war-is-over>

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**The Abortion Care Network supports abortion care providers to ensure they are able to provide excellent care to the individuals, families and communities they serve.**

## THE VANISHING LOCAL CLINIC, CONT.

Local, independent providers also face the same challenges that impact all small, community-based healthcare providers. These include costs of transitioning to electronic medical records and trying to provide patient-centered care in an atmosphere focused on consolidation, which offers huge market advantages to large healthcare systems.

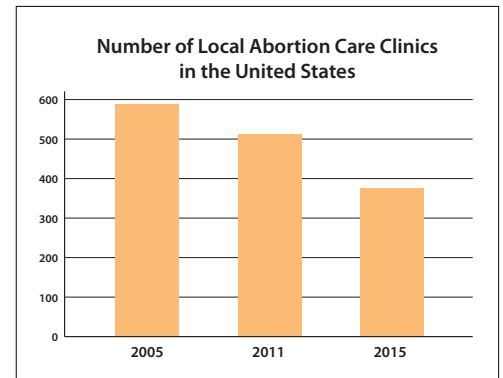
In both progressive and conservative states, the challenges facing local clinics are urgent and substantial. But, unlike other healthcare specialties, there is no

safety net for abortion care. As access diminishes, more people will resort to dangerous and illegal pre-Roe means to end pregnancies.

Independent abortion care providers are an essential part of safe abortion care in this country. The Abortion Care Network (ACN) is dedicated to the unique needs of these providers and the people they serve.

When you support ACN, you are helping us provide independent providers the tools and resources to keep high-quality, patient-centered abortion care available in communities throughout the United

States. We need your support to ensure abortion care clinics, and the individuals and families who rely on the necessary care they provide, are able to thrive.



## 5 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ABORTION CARE PROVIDERS

**#1 Abortion care providers believe that abortion is the best option for all people all the time.** On the contrary, it is actually the job of abortion care providers to ensure that people are given the tools and resources to arrive at the decision they feel is best for themselves and their families – whether that is abortion, parenting or making an adoption plan. Abortion care providers are there to make one of those options – abortion – a possibility.

**#2 Abortion care providers are only in it for the money.** Gynecological services have some of the lowest insurance reimbursement rates of any specialty. Additionally, the cost of an abortion hasn't changed much since legalization in 1973. However, the cost of providing abortions has increased significantly since that time. The passage of anti-choice legislation drives costs up even more. Renovation and building expenses, the creation of ambulatory surgical centers, court battles to keep clinics open, unnecessary ultrasounds and waiting periods, additional security and other regulations mean that most clinics operate within razor-thin margins. Abortion care providers are mission-driven, not profit-driven.

**#3 Nurses and physicians are the only professionals involved in abortion care.** Abortion care is provided by a broad range of professionals within and outside of the clinical setting. In the clinic, provider teams include counselors, nurses, physicians, medical assistants, administrative professionals and volunteers. Outside of the clinic, researchers, lawyers and community partners, like abortion funds, contribute to a supportive environment that extends beyond clinic doors.



**#4 Physicians are the only abortion care providers that face harassment.** While most high-profile cases of abortion provider harassment focus on physicians, other abortion care professionals face violence and harassment too. Clinic owners and administrators are regularly targeted in their communities and at their homes. Protestors have even been known to demonstrate outside of schools attended by their children. Providers, from medical assistants to counselors, and even volunteer patient escorts, have been targeted with hate mail, threatening phone calls and physical violence.

**#5 People who work in abortion care do not experience abortion stigma.** Every day, both patients and those who provide abortions experience abortion stigma. Physicians are often ostracized from “traditional” medical spaces and may be denied professional opportunities or admitting privileges at local hospitals because of their connection to abortion care. Clinic staff often find that they can't talk to their family or friends about their work for fear of being judged. Many providers feel isolated from their community. Regardless of abortion stigma, they provide this essential healthcare.

When you support the Abortion Care Network, you become a part of a community that supports patient-centered abortion care providers. You contribute to work that delivers full-spectrum pregnancy and abortion care, reduces abortion stigma for patients and providers and supports independent abortion care providers throughout the United States with professional development opportunities and resources - from Fargo, ND to McAllen, TX.

# ASK YOUR MOTHER

By Rebecca Willman, ACN Member Support and Operations Coordinator

I've known that my mom had an abortion for as long as I can remember. "And if I hadn't, I wouldn't have had you!" she always said.

As a teen, I learned that my mom had one of the first legal abortions in the United States, in New York, prior to the passage of Roe v. Wade. My growing brain exploded a little. Before Roe v. Wade?! It sounded so archaic.

When the #AskYourMother social media campaign launched last month encouraging people to talk with their mothers about abortion, I was reminded how much my mom's experience influenced my desire to do this work. I called her to tell her so, and to ask her to share her story once more. She agreed, and to my surprise stated that she'd never realized that she'd impacted my work so strongly.

It was 1970, my mom was in college in Peoria, IL, and had just met my father. She'd just begun the summer term between her freshman and sophomore year, and like many 19 year-olds, she became pregnant and didn't want to be. But there weren't many legal options, except in New York. Luckily, her parents lived in Long Island, so after a lot of

agonizing about how the news would be received, she called home.

My mom explained: "I called my father, because I didn't really talk to my mother about serious stuff. I told him that I was pregnant and that I wanted an abortion, and I wasn't really sure how he'd react. But he and your grandmother were very supportive. They told me to come home and we would take care of it. It was the longest plane trip of my life. I wasn't upset about the abortion, I just felt like I had let them down – disappointed them.

"My dad met me at the airport and put those fears to rest. He loved me no matter what. He said that sometimes smart people did some dumb things (as in no condom), but that didn't mean he didn't love me and support me. A few days later I went to the doctor for an examination and the date for the abortion was set – the day after the New York state law went into effect.

"I remember feeling so uncomfortable in the days before my appointment because it was constantly on the news – it was a big deal, you know, that abortions were finally going to be legal. After what seemed like eternity, the day came. The abortion was done in the hospital, and they made



me stay overnight. They used general anesthesia and I was out for the whole thing. I went home the next day. I ended up staying home the rest of the summer, working with my dad. I went back to school in the fall and life went on."

I'm grateful to have been raised in a family where honesty and individuality were valued more than ideology (I mean, how awesome were my grandparents?!). My first job out of college was for a small nonprofit that supported the needs of independent abortion providers – which later became the Abortion Care Network (ACN). That was 16 years ago. About two years ago, I came back to ACN after working in clinics for several years and earning a graduate degree where I researched and published about abortion, sexuality and a number of related topics.

My mom said that all she'd ever hoped was that I'd be happy, that I'd be able to choose my own path and live a life doing what I love. And how wonderful it feels to say in return, "That's exactly what I'm doing, Ma. That's exactly what I'm doing."



## ACN BOARD AND STAFF

ACN's Board and Staff at a Strategic Planning Meeting in Philadelphia, October 2015

Front row (from left to right): Rebecca Willman, Brenda Tolbert, Kelly Flynn, Tammi Kromenaker, Kim F. Chiz, Jen Moore Conrow, and Megan Smith. Back row: David S. Cohen, Jamie Beers, Nikki Madsen, Erin-Aja Grant, Julianna Gonen, Dallas Schubert, Molly Rampe Thomas, and Amanda Dennis.



Abortion Care Network  
P.O. Box 16323  
St Louis Park, MN 55416

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# CELEBRATE ABORTION CARE

CULTURE SHIFTING! STIGMA BUSTING!

The anti-choice movement has been extremely effective at creating a culture that has resulted in the changing of laws, beliefs and behaviors. Our work at the Abortion Care Network seeks to challenge these social norms that bully, shame and marginalize people seeking and providing abortion care.

To create social change we must introduce new perspectives – and we feel that artists play an essential role. Thus, we are excited to announce that the Abortion Care Network is teaming up with Heather Ault, founder of 4000 Years for Choice, to develop a poster series celebrating the work of the staff and community clinics that provide patient-centered abortion care in spite of the fear and harassment.

These beautiful images capture the essence of excellent abortion care by shining a bright light on the spaces where patients are cared for... in independent clinics across the country. Upon seeing the preview of these posters, abortion care providers responded: "These posters brought tears of joy to my eyes!"

To view and purchase Celebrate Abortion Care posters visit our website at [www.abortioncarenetwork.org/celebrate](http://www.abortioncarenetwork.org/celebrate). Proceeds from the purchase of these posters will support abortion stigma busting efforts.

