



Abortion Care Network
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NEWS

The Newsletter of Abortion Care Network | Spring 2019

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CREATING DIGITAL TOOLS TO CONNECT TO LOCAL CARE

Finding an abortion clinic can be difficult. Abortion is still largely shrouded in secrecy, which means that few people know about their local abortion clinic before they need care, and few patients talk openly about the clinic where they had their abortion. Further, anti-abortion extremists are constantly pushing deception and myths about abortion, making it difficult for patients to know what to look for and what to avoid.

Independent abortion clinics (Indies) make up about half of all abortion clinics and provide nearly two thirds of all abortion care in the US. In six states, the only abortion clinics are independent, and in many regions, Indies are the only places offering both medication and in-clinic procedures. If patients only know to search for well-known clinics with national name recognition, there's a chance they will have to travel farther than necessary or that they may not be able to access abortion at all.

We want people to get the abortion care they need without unnecessary hurdles. To help make that a reality, Abortion Care Network (ACN) developed and collaborated on digital tools to help people find their local independent abortion clinic. We hope these tools will not only connect patients to care, but will help advocates, volunteers, and donors find and support their local Indie clinics.

Finding a Clinic You Can Trust

Abortion Care Network has over 100 independent clinic members nationwide, and we're proud of the compassionate, patient-centered care they provide. In order to help people find these clinics, we created the *Clinic Finder*, a searchable map at www.abortioncarenetwork.org/clinics. Because we want patients to get the care they need, when and where they need it, we've also included links to the National Network of Abortion Funds and additional trustworthy clinic directories.

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MEET ACN'S NEW STAFF!

Lori Rodriguez is the Communications Associate at ACN. She comes to this role from Equality for HER, a social justice media platform she helped grow with a friend she met at Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA). While at PPFA, she piloted a national Spanish translation program and was introduced to reproductive justice groups like SisterSong, who she consulted for during their inaugural Artists of Color for Reproductive Justice convening. Before then, she did communications at Basic Rights Oregon, an LGBTQ rights organization where she had the pleasure of helping write the introduction speech for a Bernie Sanders rally, which was the first time a trans person was ever invited to open for a presidential candidate.



Lori and Clay Aiken sit down for a chat

Creating Digital Tools..., Continued

One of those directories is **ineedana.com**, an independent website that lists Abortion Care Network and National Abortion Federation member clinics, as well as Planned Parenthood centers. It is the most comprehensive, accurate listing of US abortion clinics we've seen thus far, and ACN staff were thrilled to partner with the site's founders to support its creation.

Tools that Work for More People

Accurate clinic directories that patients can trust are crucially important – many people will search for, find, and ultimately access a clinic through online searches. However, finding a clinic online isn't always an option: for some, it's not safe to search on a shared computer, and others may not have a private device that connects to the internet. That's why we created a **Find-A-Clinic tool accessible by text message**. The text line works on any device with texting capabilities – no smartphone required – and doesn't require internet access. It's the first and only text service of its kind, and we're proud to be able to offer this tool so that more people can safely and privately find the care they need.

Exposing Fake Clinics

An integral part of accessing respectful, expert reproductive health care is knowing what to avoid. While independent abortion clinics provide the majority of abortion care in the US, these clinics often lack highly visible branding and ubiquitous name recognition. Fake women's health centers – storefront operations that do not offer legitimate health care and actively work to push abortion out of reach – capitalize on that fact by using deceptive advertising and mimicking the names of Indie clinics in an attempt to lure patients through their doors. That's why we're so glad that **ExposeFakeClinics.com** exists. Driven by the Abortion Access Hackathon and Lady Parts Justice League, the site is a collaborative tool that helps patients and advocates identify, expose, and avoid fake clinics. We hope you'll utilize the site to report fake clinics and to help others avoid these deceptive centers in your community.

FIND-A-CLINIC

To find a clinic, simply text "hello" to 202-883-4620; you'll be prompted to enter a ZIP code and will then receive information for the three closest ACN member clinics, as well as links to additional clinic directories and abortion funds to help pay for care.

2019 Person of the Year Recipient

HOPE MEDICAL GROUP FOR WOMEN

Hope Medical Group for Women is an independent abortion clinic located in Shreveport, Louisiana. Founded in 1980, they are one of only three clinics remaining in Louisiana, and they serve patients who are forced to travel from Mississippi, Texas, and Arkansas for care.

The state of Louisiana imposes a staggering number of politically motivated, medically unnecessary restrictions on providing and accessing abortion care. Undeterred and unafraid, Hope Medical Group for Women helps patients navigate these burdensome and unjust barriers – including forced waiting periods, mandatory ultrasound and parental consent laws, and bans on insurance coverage.

At the time of award announcement, the clinic was in the middle of one state and three federal court cases – all of which have enormous implications for the future of abortion rights and access in Louisiana and throughout the US.



Image courtesy Hope Medical Group for Women



Provider Spotlight:

ASHIA GEORGE

Registered Nurse and Clinic Supervisor, Scotsdale Women's Center, Detroit, Michigan

What's the most rewarding thing about your job?

My calling in life is to serve others and help my community. A rewarding part of my job is gaining the trust and respect of people during their most private and vulnerable moments. Being able to help pregnant people choose their own destinies, on their own terms, and feel confident while doing it is very fulfilling. Seeing how emotional, happy and relieved patients are after receiving care is what keeps me going.

What's the most challenging thing about your job?

Sometimes it's a challenge maintaining balance between work and home life. I genuinely care about clients and the clinic so much that my brain has a difficult time adjusting when my shift ends. I manage a 24 hours nurse line where clients can call the clinic after-hours, leave messages with questions or concerns and I call them back any time of day. I am always willing to go the extra mile to help pregnant people in need.

What do you want people to know about being a nurse in abortion care?

Nursing before, during, and after abortion care is imperative to a person's holistic health. My role as nurse is to act as patient advocate and support client's needs. Everyone who walks in our doors has a different, unique spirit and personality. It's my duty to assess their readiness for care and any emotional-physical barriers. I also perform other nursing tasks such as administering medications, providing therapeutic IV sedation, and educating clients about aftercare and healing. Twice in my life I sought abortion care, and I remember exactly what it felt like to be in that position – to feel alone and be so afraid. I promised myself to be a refuge for anyone struggling with uncertainty and despair.

What is a benefit you've gotten from being a part of ACN?

While providers work tirelessly to care for clients, ACN unwaveringly reinforces providers in almost every way. Whether it's a client, staff, or clinic need, they will connect you with resources. ACN lifts members up with praise and support that helps us persevere. Experiencing the network's growth and seeing it become more and more valuable is exciting and inspiring. Abortion Care Network has made me into a better provider and staff leader, and it's helped me find my own voice in the reproductive justice and rights movement and gain the courage to stand up and speak out for the holistic needs of pregnant people.

2019 Lifetime Achievement Recipient

FRANCINE THOMPSON



Francine Thompson is the Executive Director of Emma Goldman Clinic in Iowa City, Iowa, where she has served for over 30 years. Francine is recognized as a pioneer and leader in the reproductive health, rights, and justice movements.

Her colleagues describe her as a courageous, thoughtful, and innovative leader, dedicated to ensuring dignified, equitable access to care. Thompson has been a fierce advocate both for the people of Iowa and for independent abortion clinics nationally, as well as a mentor and champion for emerging leaders.

During her time at Emma Goldman clinic, Francine oversaw the development and implementation of cutting-edge services, including HIV screening and counseling, Emergency Contraception, health services for men, second trimester abortion, and transgender health services.

“Abortion Care Network has made me into a better provider and staff leader, and it's helped me find my own voice in the reproductive justice and rights movement and gain the courage to stand up and speak out for the holistic needs of pregnant people.”

- Ashia George, Registered Nurse and Clinic Supervisor, Scotsdale Women's Center

Abortion Care Network supports independent, community-based abortion care providers to ensure they are able to provide excellent care to the individuals, families, and communities they serve.

Abortion Care Network
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



These are challenging times for abortion clinic staff in the US!

As extremism increases - in the courts, state houses, and outside clinic doors - the staff of independent clinics continue to show up for their patients and their communities. The majority of people who have an abortion in the US get care at an independent clinic, making frontline staff some of the most important health professionals in the country. Yet abortion stigma and lack of resources limits their access to professional development opportunities.



With your gift to Abortion Care Network, you can show the staff at our member clinics how much you value and appreciate their dedication!

Now through July 4th, every dollar donated to ACN's Staff Support Fund goes towards scholarships, on-site training, and the professional resources staff need to thrive.

As a Staff Support Funder, you can be assured that your donation goes directly to help frontline staff deliver compassionate, patient-centered care.

Donate today:
www.abortioncarenetwork.org/donate

Image courtesy Allentown Women's Center