



Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc.

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Planned Parenthood Challenges Abortion Access Restrictions

MADISON – Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI) today filed a lawsuit challenging several medically unnecessary abortion access restrictions. These restrictions unconstitutionally limit access to abortion care in Wisconsin.

The federal lawsuit challenges several provisions of Wisconsin law that do not enhance the health and safety of patients. Rather, these laws serve only to make abortion more difficult to access. PPWI is challenging three restrictions:

PHYSICIAN-ONLY RESTRICTION: This access restriction blocks qualified advanced practice nurses, including certified nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives, from providing abortion care, despite the fact that they already provide much more complex care to patients. In fact, advanced practice nurses routinely provide care identical to abortion procedures when a patient is experiencing a miscarriage.

SAME-PHYSICIAN RESTRICTION: Under a Wisconsin law that PPWI is not currently challenging, a woman seeking an abortion must make two separate trips to the health center, at least 24 hours apart. The same-physician restriction requires a woman seeking a medication abortion to see the same physician for both visits. This requirement is outside the norms of standard medical care. Patients often see one medical professional for part of their care and another provider for later visits. For example, physicians routinely work in group practices where responsibilities for patient care are shared based on coverage schedules. Medication abortion is the only context where a law like this exists. It doesn't apply to any other medical care – not even other abortion procedures.

PHYSICAL PRESENCE RESTRICTION: This access restriction requires the physician who prescribed the drug that begins a medication abortion to be physically present when the patient is handed her pills. This requirement applies only to medication abortion and is a stark departure from how prescription medication is dispensed to patients in every other context.

Statement from Tanya Atkinson, President and CEO of PPWI:

“Deciding to start a family, delay becoming a parent, or ending a pregnancy are some of the most personal decisions a woman could make. PPWI is challenging these restrictions because they interfere with a woman's ability to make her own health care decisions and make it more difficult to access the care she needs.

“These restrictions are unconstitutional because they place unnecessary barriers in the way of women seeking health care. They are not based in health or safety. They exist only to limit access to safe abortion care in Wisconsin, and that is why we are launching this legal challenge.”

PPWI is being represented by attorneys from Pines Bach LLP and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Attorneys from Jenner & Block LLP are also representing PPWI on a pro bono basis.

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Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is a nonprofit health care provider serving 60,000 patients annually at 21 health centers. Planned Parenthood provides the full range of comprehensive reproductive health care including well woman exams, breast and cervical cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, birth control and abortion care.