For Immediate Release
June 8, 2015

State Senate Scheduled to Vote on Dangerous Abortion Ban Bill

Despite Overwhelming Opposition by Wisconsin Medical Community, GOP Determined to Fast Track Bill

Madison, WI – The Wisconsin State Senate is scheduled to vote tomorrow on legislation that would ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. The proposed legislation is riddled with medically inaccurate terminology and legislative findings. Even more importantly, the legislation poses a significant threat to women’s health and the practice of medicine in Wisconsin.

The bill, SB 179, is overwhelmingly opposed by Wisconsin’s medical community. Many of Wisconsin’s leading medical organizations—such as the Wisconsin Medical Society, the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians and the Wisconsin Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists—all oppose SB 179 because it inserts politicians into the physician-patient relationship and undermines patient health and safety. Today, 55 Wisconsin-based obstetrician-gynecologists submitted the attached open letter to the state Senate urging senators to reject the bill.

In addition to the numerous Wisconsin doctors who spoke out against the bill at last week’s joint hearing, committee members also heard incredibly personal and tragic stories of Wisconsin women who faced a complicated pregnancy. These women spoke about how this legislation would have interfered with the sacred and trusted physician-patient relationships that they relied on to guide them through some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

“As an advocacy organization dedicated to promoting public policies that allow women to realize their optimal health, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health (WAWH) strongly urges members of the Wisconsin State Senate to listen to Wisconsin’s medical community and oppose SB 179,” said WAWH Executive Director, Sara Finger. “The fact that Wisconsin’s established medical community is telling legislators that this bill is wrong for patients and the practice of medicine and with the heartbreaking testimony from women, it’s clear that politicians have no business inserting themselves into these very difficult situations.”

If the Senate goes ahead and votes on this bill tomorrow they will have “fast-tracked” this legislation in just 19 short days during a very heated state budget debate.

“Wisconsin women and Wisconsin physicians deserved more respect from their elected leaders, noted Finger. “The medical community has stated unequivocally that this legislation is bad for women’s health and bad for the practice of medicine. It’s time for legislators to listen to the experts and the women who will be harmed and shelve this bill.”

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The vision of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health (WAWH) is an environment in which all Wisconsin women, at every stage and every stage of their life, can realize their optimal health, safety and economic security. Visit www.supportwomenshealth.org.
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To Governor Walker and Members of the Wisconsin legislature:

The 55 undersigned obstetrician-gynecologists strongly oppose SB 179. We are Wisconsin voters and our patients are Wisconsin voters.

By banning abortions after 20 weeks, especially without exceptions that help to protect women, SB 179 ties the hands of doctors seeking to help women and their loved ones. This is bad medicine, based on the thoroughly debunked fallacy that a 20-week fetus—which is not viable—can feel pain.

SB 179 would block Wisconsin ob-gyns from being able to treat our patients in a medically appropriate and humane manner. This bill would undoubtedly place us in the unconscionable position of having to watch our patients and their loved ones undergo additional emotional trauma, illness and suffering during what is already a difficult time.

As ob-gyns, we urge you to vote against SB 179.

Only a woman and her trusted doctors—not elected officials—should make decisions about her health.

Help us protect our patients. Oppose SB 179.

Kathy Harke, MD, Brookfield – Chair
Sheldon Wasserman, MD, Milwaukee – Vice Chair
Lindsey Anderson, medical student, Madison
Allen Babitz, MD, Fox Point
Brian Bear, MD, Milwaukee
Eliza Bennett, MD, Madison
Camila Bomtempo, MD, Milwaukee
Irene Bozich, MD, Milwaukee
Sarah Bradley, MD, Madison
Anita Bublik-Anderson, MD, Wausau
Curtis Cornella-Carlson, DO, Hartland
Callie Cox, MD, Milwaukee
Meredith Cruz, MD, New Berlin
Robert Cruz, III, MD, Sussex
Susan Davidson, MD, Madison
Dorene Dempster, MD, Sturgeon Bay
Michelle Douglas, DO, Milwaukee
Bruce Drummond, MD, Madison
Brent Fletcher, MD, Wisconsin Rapids
Jason Foil, MD, Milwaukee
Dobie Giles, MD, Middleton
Michael Gilman, MD, Mequon
Karen Gotwalt, MD, Wauwatosa
Darin Gregory, MD, Dousman
Jenny Hackforth, MD Madison
John Hale, MD, Green Bay
Lori House, MD, Madison
Jacinda Hunter, MD, Milwaukee

Brenda Jenkin, MD, Sun Prairie
Sivakami Kangayappan, MD, Manitowoc
Marley Kercher, MD, Neenah
Mike Lassier, MD, Milwaukee
Dan Lebovic, MD, Middleton
David LeCloux, MD, Crivitz
Francesca Lynd, MD, Whitefish Bay
Anne Martinelli, MD, Wauwatosa
Jason McMaster, MD, Brookfield
Raj Narayan, MD, Milwaukee
Debra Olson, MD, Pewaukee
Nancy Rich, MD, Madison
Katherine Sample, MD, Madison
Kathryn Sarnoski, MD, Wauwatosa
Gloria Sarto, MD, Madison
Christine, Sponagle, MD, Waukesha
Suzanne Swanson, MD, Appleton
Cara Syth, MD, Menomonee
Jessica Thomason, MD, Mequon
Gerald Vitamvas, MD, Milwaukee
Donald Weber, MD, Eau Claire
Claire Wendland, MD, Madison
Beth Wiedel, MD, Madison
Anna Marie Windsor, MD, Milwaukee
Frank Wittmaach, MD, De Pere
Sarah Yanke, MD, Madison
Jessica Zigman, MD, Milwaukee