

Statement of Members of the Coalition to Protect the Patient-Provider Relationship* Regarding Mandating Health Care Professionals Provide Unsubstantiated Medical Information

The undersigned members of the Coalition to Protect the Patient-Provider Relationship express serious concern about an increasing number of governmental actions that inappropriately interfere in the relationship between patients and their health care providers by requiring health care professionals to violate their medical training and ethical obligation to their patients. We urge states to exercise caution and restraint to safeguard this important relationship.

The Coalition to Protect the Patient-Provider Relationship is comprised of non-partisan, nonprofit organizations united in our opposition to inappropriate interference in the relationship between a patient and health care provider. This relationship is one in which sensitive and confidential information is privately exchanged in trusted, open and honest discussion. We believe that all parties speaking to the provision of health care should respect the unique nature of the patient-provider relationship and support the ethical obligation of the health care provider to deliver individualized, evidence-based care and put the patient first.

Recently, the states of Arizona and Arkansas mandated that medical professionals providing abortion care tell their patients that medication abortion may be reversible – a claim wholly unsubstantiated by any reliable evidence, with no basis in medical science. This mandate is emblematic of a larger trend of lawmakers abusing their responsibilities by imposing ideological views on licensed and highly trained health care professionals.

Political interference in the practice of medicine is a growing and alarming trend that is affecting women's health, gun safety and environmental health, as well as other important medical issues.

We urge all legislators to ensure that laws adhere to the following principles to protect the patient-provider relationship:

1. Providers should not be prohibited by law or regulation from discussing with, or asking their patients about, risk factors that evidence shows may negatively impact their health, or from disclosing clinically relevant information to patients.
2. The information and care provided should be consistent with the best available medical evidence on clinical effectiveness and appropriateness and professional standards of care.
3. The information and care should be tailored to individual patient circumstances and allow for flexibility as to the most appropriate time, setting and means of delivering information and care, as determined by the provider and patient.
4. The information and care provided should facilitate shared decision-making between patients and their providers, based on the best medical evidence, the provider's knowledge and clinical judgment, and patient values, beliefs, and preferences.

We hope we can all agree that health care providers should not be forced to choose between their professional and ethical obligation to provide evidence-based, high-quality care and following misguided laws, and that patients should not receive care that has no medical basis or is inappropriate to their circumstances.

Signed:

American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Physicians - Arizona Chapter
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Student Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Public Health Association
Center for Reproductive Rights
Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Physicians Alliance
National Women's Law Center
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America

** Any views expressed by the Coalition to Protect the Patient-Provider Relationship do not represent the endorsement of member organizations unless expressly stated.*