



New Mexico's Reproductive Health Values Must Be Upheld

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Nationwide, post-*Dobbs* decision healthcare bans have drastically reduced the accessibility of the [full spectrum of reproductive health care services](#). The overturning of the United States constitutional right to abortion has reinforced that individual states hold the authority to establish laws governing access to reproductive healthcare. Even in so-called “safe haven” states like New Mexico, underserved populations including undocumented, low-income, rural, gender and sexual minority and communities of color continue to face heightened challenges in obtaining quality and timely care. In addressing key barriers, New Mexican values should be at the forefront of efforts to improve family planning access at the individual, community, and system-wide levels.

New Mexico: Values

Research and New Mexico’s long history of working to protect the legal right to reproductive healthcare show that a majority of New Mexicans [support access to reproductive healthcare services](#). Focus group data estimates that nearly [70%](#) of New Mexicans living in rural areas agree that New Mexicans need access to reproductive healthcare. In addition to easy access to care, New Mexicans value treatment approaches that are identity-inclusive, patient-driven and culturally-congruent.

New Mexico: Legal & Political Landscape

State efforts to uphold values in regard to the full spectrum of reproductive health care services include: reaffirming the right to reproductive and gender-affirming health care ([House Bill 7](#)); shielding abortion providers and patients from civil or criminal prosecution ([Senate Bill 13](#)); generous Medicaid coverage; private [insurance companies’](#) coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices; and prohibiting discrimination based on sex and gender, per the NM Constitution. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as: limited access to care in communities of obstetric deserts; undocumented patients not qualifying for Medicaid coverage; and legal challenges from out-of-state interest groups imposing a system of abortion-restrictive agendas.

New Mexico: Barriers to Care

Approximately [60%](#) of New Mexicans live in rural areas where communities struggle to obtain quality medical care; in fact, [thirty-nine areas](#) in the state are considered medically underserved. In New Mexico, [critical healthcare workforce shortages](#) are apparent, with only 39% of statewide primary care needs met. Moreover, [over half of New Mexico’s counties are classified as maternity care deserts or low access regions](#), meaning that access to maternity health care services is limited or absent. Community programs have tried to address these challenges by providing wrap-around services that connect individuals to reproductive healthcare resources in their local community – or, in the case of out-of-state patients, connect them to services that are more logistically accessible. Nevertheless, concern about fleeting reproductive healthcare programming that depends on unreliable, non-recurrent funding sources remains imperative to address. State fiscal appropriations that will sustainably finance recent legislation intended to ensure the availability of the full range of reproductive healthcare and the legal protection of medical providers who deliver such care are highly advisable.

Addressing New Mexicans’ Reproductive Access

State legislators must **continue to safeguard the legal right to reproductive healthcare services** in New Mexico and **implement sustainable funding structures** to finance long-term reproductive healthcare provision. Such funding should address rural workforce shortages, ensure the availability of affordable and widely accessible over-the-counter oral contraceptives, and uphold a continued dedication to patient-affirming care.

The complex interplay between reproductive health care availability and access to care in post-*Dobbs* New Mexico cannot be overstated. Barriers of cost, transportation, stigma, and insufficient rural healthcare workforce can be diffused by implementing a multifaceted, patient-centered and community-informed approach to reproductive healthcare provision that focuses on improving access in marginalized communities. Remaining rooted in New Mexican values while elevating the groups least likely to have access to care is the only way to actualize the availability and maintenance of the full range of reproductive healthcare services.

New Mexican families deserve the right to build a better future and New Mexican values demand access to reproductive healthcare services. Impactful changes to reproductive healthcare funding structures will secure access to family planning services and mitigate the post-*Dobbs* strain on New Mexican healthcare providers. A fortified foundation of accessible, quality family planning services will improve health outcomes for women, birthing people and children while bolstering economic opportunities along the pathway to cultivating a thriving society in the Land of Enchantment.