



Expanding the Role of Advanced Practice Clinicians in Abortion Care

An innovative strategy to overcoming
barriers to abortion access





Mission



Access to safe abortion for all
women in the U.S.





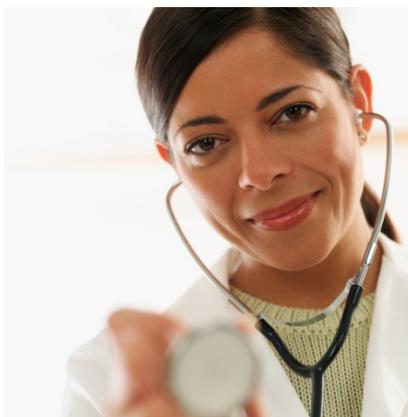
Strategy

- Identify gaps in access and create and support innovative responses to these gaps
- Catalyze changes in health care and reproductive health activism
- Increase the participation of a wide range of health care providers in providing and connecting women to safe abortion care
- Work with local partners and connect this work to national organizations and resources





Who provides abortions?



- In 2000 there were 1,819 abortion providers in the U.S. including clinics, hospitals, and physicians offices
- As with other procedures, care is usually delivered by multidisciplinary teams that include RNs, counselors, and APCs and physicians.
- MDs are the primary providers – performing the procedures and managing patient care





The Shortage of Abortion Providers

- The number of providers is steadily declining in the U.S.
 - Since 1982 it has fallen by 37%
- First trimester abortion procedures are a routine part of training in only 46% of ob-gyn residency programs
- 1/3rd of women ages 15-44 live in a county without an abortion provider





The Critical Role of APCs



- APCs include Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Midwives, and Physician Assistants
- APCs have a greater role in health care delivery than ever before and their numbers are growing
- APCs have a least some degree of prescriptive authority in all 50 states





Strategies for Expanding Access

- 1990 NAF and ACOG symposium identifies APCs' "considerable promise for expanding the pool of abortion providers" and recommends training
- By 1990, PA's were providing abortion in MT and VT
- Early organizing included first chapters of midwives, PA's and NPs for choice





Barriers to APC practice

- Physician only laws
- Perception of abortion as a difficult procedure
- Perception that providing abortions is the exclusive realm of physicians.
- Variation of legal picture among states.



Pivotal changes

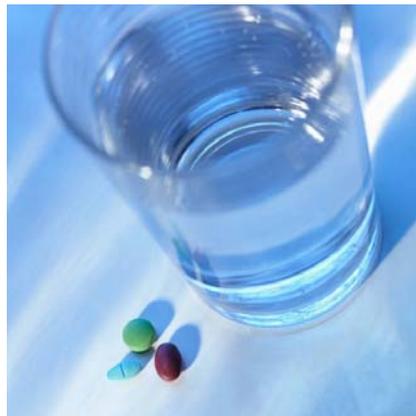
- 1994 - NYCLU obtains a declaratory ruling from the NYDH
- 1996 - NAF Symposium brings together advocates and providers to discuss how to promote the role of APCs
- 2000 – FDA approval of mifepristone widens doors to an alternative early ab technique





New Abortion Provider Training Initiative, 1999

- To identify, train, support APCs as abortion providers





Project Model

- Legal research
- Organizing statewide coalitions
- Providing abortion training to APCs
- Providing ongoing community and administrative support





Legal research asks....

- Right question: “Is there anything in my state statutes or practice acts that prohibits an APC from providing abortions?”
- Wrong question: “Is it legal for APCs to provide abortion in my state?”





Legal research must include...

- Analysis of relevant state statutes, laws and regulations regarding abortion
- Analysis of relevant state statutes & regulations regarding the scope of practice
- Analysis of state & national training & licensing standards, procedural practice requirements, & disciplinary protocols governing each APC professional group





Declaratory Rulings

- 2000: Rhode Island Dept. of Health
- 2001: CT Attorney General
- 2004: MT Board of Nursing
- 2004: WA Attorney General
- 2006: OR Board of Nursing





Organizing and Training

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Training
- Individual assistance and support



Collaboration

- Clinicians for Choice
- APC Working Group





Results

- 2001-2006 AAP launched project activity in 17 states
- AAP has trained 107 new abortion providers and helped set up 11 new clinic sites
- APCs now providing in 14 states, vs. 2 when the project began





Training

- Local
- Case by case



Sustainability

- APCs practicing in independent *primary care* practices in 5 states
- Independent training and organizing activities in 50% of states
- Next steps include integrating training into APC education programs and developing state leadership among APC abortion providers





Summary

- APCs are qualified providers of abortion care and have expanded access for thousands of women
- Expanding the role of APCs in abortion care is part of a larger solution that calls for increased participation across professional groups
- Laws and regulations need to support the role of APCs and other health professions as do the policies and practices of institutions that train health professionals and deliver health care





Broader Lessons

- Opportunities to expand access are not always immediately apparent
- We can't just fight attacks – we need to develop creative, proactive strategies
- Cross-disciplinary partnerships are essential





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