

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
POLICY

Subject: Abortion
Document Number: PS-101-0
Effective Date: June 7, 2006
Revision Date(s): November 4, 2022

POLICY STATEMENT

The South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA) believes that the issue of support of or opposition to abortion is a matter for individuals to decide, based on personal values or beliefs. The SDSMA will take no action which may be construed as an attempt to alter or influence the personal views of individual physicians regarding abortion procedures.

The SDSMA believes that: (1) abortion is a medical procedure and shall be performed only by a duly licensed, appropriately trained physician/surgeon (MD or DO) in conformance with standards of good medical practice and the Medical Practice Act of his or her state; and (2) no physician or other professional personnel should be required to perform an act that violates good medical judgment. Physicians, hospitals, and hospital personnel should not be required to perform any act that violates personally held moral principles. In these circumstances, good medical practice requires only that the physician or other professional withdraw from the case so long as the withdrawal is consistent with good medical practice.

The SDSMA's position is: (1) to strongly condemn interference by the government or other third parties that causes a physician to compromise his or her medical judgment as to what information or treatment is in the best interest of patients; (2) to work with other organizations, as appropriate, to vigorously pursue legislative relief from regulations or statutes that prevent physicians from freely discussing with or providing information to patients about medical care and procedures or which interfere with the physician-patient relationship; (3) to communicate its continued opposition to any regulation that proposes restrictions on physician-patient communications; (4) to inform the public as to the dangers inherent in regulations or statutes restricting communication between physicians and their patients; (5) to work to assure that the privacy rights of patients are maintained; (6) to support shared decision-making between patients and their physicians regarding reproductive healthcare; (7) to oppose any effort to undermine the basic medical principle that clinical assessments, such as viability of the pregnancy and safety of the pregnant person, are determinations to be made only by healthcare professionals with their patients; (8) to oppose the imposition of criminal and civil penalties or other retaliatory efforts against patients, patient advocates, physicians, other healthcare workers, and health systems for receiving, assisting in, referring patients to, or providing medically appropriate reproductive health services; and (9) to advocate for legal protections for patients who cross state lines to receive reproductive health services or medications from across state lines, and legal protections for those that provide, support, or refer patients to these services.

The SDSMA cautions members of the Board of Directors, Policy Council, committees, employees, and members to precisely state current SDSMA policy on abortion and related issues to minimize public

misperception of SDSMA policy and urges that the SDSMA refute misstatements and misquotes by the media with reference to SDSMA abortion policy.

AUTHORITY

South Dakota State Medical Association Council of Physicians, 6/7/2006; 11/4/2022; Reaffirmed by South Dakota State Medical Association Board of Directors, 11/5/2020; 11/7/2022.