

In the Wake of Dobbs: Registered Nurses' Perceptions of State-based Abortion Policies

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Background

- ❖ Registered nurses (RNs) are in a unique position to support abortion access as trusted care providers, supporters, and advocates of women's healthcare.
- ❖ 14 states have implemented total abortion bans with minimal exceptions, forcing individuals who seek abortions to confront significant logistical and financial barriers if they choose to travel out of state, pursue a self-managed abortion, or carry an unwanted pregnancy to term (Guttmacher Institute, 2024).
- ❖ Medical residents who had initially planned to practice in states with restrictive abortion laws were eight times more likely to alter their practice plans compared to those intending to work in states with protected abortion access (Woodcock et al., 2023).

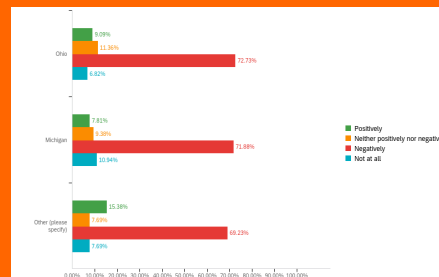
Methods

- ❖ Electronic survey administered to a random sample of registered nurses in two states, one with abortion policies considered restrictive (Ohio, N=5,000) and one with abortion policies considered protective (Michigan, N=5,000) (Guttmacher Institute, 2024).
- ❖ Email lists obtained from each state's Board of Nursing. An initial email invite with the survey link was sent in October 2024, with two more reminder email waves sent in November and December 2024.
- ❖ The researcher's Institutional Review Board approved the protocol before data collection began.

Results

- ✓ 121 RNs completed the survey .
✓ N=44 Ohio, N=64 Michigan, N=13 Other
- ✓ Most (86%) identified as female, White (87%), practiced somewhere other than a hospital setting (55%), and had at least a bachelor's degree (79%).
- ✓ The majority (51%) were very aware of the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization that was decided in August 2022.
- ✓ **51% stated state-based abortion policies have impacted their job satisfaction or professional morale.**
- ✓ **70% stated the current legal landscape regarding abortion negatively affects the overall healthcare environment.**
- ✓ Almost all (94%) said they were not considering relocating to a different state due to current abortion policies.
✓ (97% Ohio, 95% Michigan, 69% Other).

How do you feel the current legal landscape regarding abortion affects the overall healthcare environment?



Discussion

- ❖ Overall, respondents felt the current environment around abortion policies is negative and has impacted their professional work life in some way.
- ❖ RNs in both states perceived abortion policies to be relatively lenient, which may impact intention to stay. Even though the Guttmacher Institute considered Ohio restrictive in their abortion policies, RNs did not perceive this to be the case in Ohio.
- ❖ Relocating to a different state based on political climate is complex and not easily defined by one political issue.
- ❖ Since this was a small polit study, more research is needed to determine to what extent, if any, state-based abortion policies have on RNs intention to change practice setting or location.

References

- Guttmacher Institute. (2024). *Interactive Map: US Abortion Policies and Access After Roe*. Retrieved July 23, 2024 from <https://states.guttmacher.org/policies/>
- Woodcock A. L., Carter G., Baayd J., Turok D. K., Turk J., Sanders J. N., Pangasa M., Gawron L. M., & Kaiser, J. E. (2023). Effects of the Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization decision on obstetrics and gynecology graduating residents' practice plans. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 142(5), 1105–1111.