



IN BRIEF

AB 154 will address the current shortage of health care professionals able to provide early abortion care in California. It will authorize trained Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) to provide comprehensive first trimester abortion care, which is within the scope of their licenses. AB 154:

- Expands access to early abortion services in California
- Reflects the best scientific research
- Minimizes targeted statutory regulation of abortion
- Reaffirms California's leadership on women's health issues as legislation restricting reproductive rights sweeps the nation.

THE ISSUE

Early abortion access is a critical public health issue. An estimated one in three women will decide to terminate a pregnancy by age 45, yet many women often do not have sufficient access to early abortions because of the limited number of physicians providing the services in their communities.

Almost half of the counties in California have no accessible abortion provider, requiring women to travel significant distances to terminate a pregnancy or wait for an appointment for services. Even in those counties where abortion services are geographically accessible, long wait times and overburdened clinics result in delays for some women. These barriers can result in women delaying care until later stages of pregnancy, when a more complicated and expensive procedure is needed. The lack of access affects urban and rural women alike.

By authorizing trained and qualified health professionals to provide care, this measure would allow women to receive timely care locally from advanced trained practitioners they already know and trust through a more responsive health care delivery system.

BACKGROUND

Evidence supports safety of early abortion by advanced trained practitioners. Researchers at the University of California, San Francisco's Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health conducted a comprehensive multi-year study to train and evaluate NPs, CNMs and PAs in the provision of first trimester abortion.

The study, Health Workforce Pilot Project # 171, concluded that trained health professionals can perform early abortions as safely as physicians. Moreover, patients involved in the study expressed high rates of satisfaction with the care they received from all provider types. The study has been peer-reviewed and published in the American Journal of Public Health.

Legal ambiguity puts clinicians at risk. Because of the intense public and political controversy surrounding abortion, providers are in constant legal jeopardy when statutes governing abortion are unclear. Unfortunately, this is the case even in California, a pro-choice state. Clinicians should be legally protected as they seek to provide safe, comprehensive and accessible care to their patients within the scope of their licenses.

SPONSOR

California Women's Health Alliance:

ACCESS Women's Health Justice
American Civil Liberties Union of California
Black Women for Wellness California
Latinas for Reproductive Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice California
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Bridget Kolakosky, Office of Asm. Toni Atkins
916 319 2078 | bridget.kolakosky@asm.ca.gov

Valerie Small Navarro, ACLU (916) 442-1036 x 302
vsmallnavarro@acluleg-ca.org

Brianna Pittman, PPAC (916) 446-5247 x 109
brianna.pittman@ppacca.org

Angela Blanchard, NARAL (916) 492 -2766
angela@politicalsoolutions.us