Ending the Stigma:
A Reflection of Experiences in Nebraskan Abortion Clinics

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What happens when?

“What?! You’re pregnant??
How the hell could this have happened?”
Outcomes of Unintended Pregnancies (Approximately 3.1 Million Annually)

Abortions: 42%
Births: 44%
Miscarriages: 14%
Abortions: 0%

BACKGROUND: NEBRASKA

- Women seeking abortion represent a hidden and often silenced population, especially in conservative states like Nebraska.

- Title X clinics (14)

- Abortion clinics (3)
  - Planned Parenthood (Omaha/Lincoln)
  - Abortion & Contraception Clinic of NE (Bellevue)

- Crisis Pregnancy Centers (20)

- Abortion Providers
  - 2008 (5 Providers)
  - 2013 (3 Providers)
NEBRASKA ABORTION OPTIONS

Abortion Fee Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GESTATION</th>
<th>LOCAL ANESTHESIA</th>
<th>LOCAL PLUS I. V. SEDATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>CREDIT CARD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEDICATION ABORTIONS** up to 8 weeks 6 days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDICATION</th>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>CREDIT CARD</th>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>CREDIT CARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 8 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SURGICAL ABORTIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GESTATION</th>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>CREDIT CARD</th>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>CREDIT CARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks 0 days to 11 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
<td>$464.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 weeks 0 days to 13 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
<td>$550.00</td>
<td>$567.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 weeks 0 days to 14 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
<td>$824.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 weeks 0 days to 15 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$900.00</td>
<td>$927.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 weeks 0 days to 16 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
<td>$1030.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 weeks 0 days to 17 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$1100.00</td>
<td>$1133.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 weeks 0 days to 18 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$1300.00</td>
<td>$1339.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 weeks 0 days to 19 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$1500.00</td>
<td>$1545.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 weeks 0 days to 20 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$2000.00</td>
<td>$2060.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 weeks 0 days to 21 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$2250.00</td>
<td>$2318.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 weeks 0 days to 22 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$2500.00</td>
<td>$2575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 weeks 0 days to 23 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$2750.00</td>
<td>$2833.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 weeks 0 days to 24 weeks 6 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$3000.00</td>
<td>$3090.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population Density Per County; Nebraska 2010

- 0.6 - 7.0
- 7.1 - 100.0
- 100.1 - 500.0
- 500.1 - 1521.8

**Type of County**

- Urban County
- Frontier County

*Square Mile Census Regions defined by the Federal Office of Management and Budget*

*Produced by: University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Public Health Department of Health Services Research and Administration, 2011.*
NEBRASKA ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

20 week post-conception (22 weeks post LMP) ban¹;

Mandatory counseling must include medically inaccurate information on negative psychological effects;

24 hour waiting period after counseling²;

Ultrasound viewing laws dictate screen must be positioned towards patient;

Individuals and institutions may refuse to provide abortion services;

Abortions must be performed by a licensed physician;

Parental consent for women <18 (notarized consent of one parent, medical emergency or court order);

Funding is limited to life endangerment, rape and incest³
OUR STUDY (COLLABORATION)

Providers:

- Referral Patterns (4 scenarios; IVF, GYN ONC, ANOMALY, ABORTION)

Patients:

- On site recruitment (2 GAs)
- Mixed Methods (survey, interviews)
- Experiences
- Pregnancy diagnosis
- Physician encounter
- Decision making, rationale, barriers
- Timing to procedure
OUR PATIENT POPULATION

• N=361 women
• Age range 19-42 years (27 average)
• Race/Ethnicity:
  • 63% white, 18% black, 8% Latina and 11% who identified as non-white, non-black and non-Latina.
• Most participants were urban (86%)
• Mean gestational duration of 8 weeks 3 days (+/- 21d)
• 64% were mothers, 87% were unmarried,
• 39% had a prior abortion
• 55% opted for a surgical abortion, 44% for a medical abortion
• 1 % were undecided at the time of the survey.
BENEFITS/BARRIERS

• Very personal, intimate experience
• Patients distrust the medical system; some wary of interviewer
• Limited access to patients resulted in limited recruitment
• Logistics/ method of appointment scheduling
• Timing of survey administration- *before vs. after patient receives education*
• Encountered protesters often (feared for safety, being recognized in public)
• Overall, **the study was an opportunity to empower, support, and relate to women in vulnerable situations**
WOMEN SEEKING ABORTION CARE:

• Most women were certain that they were making the right choice
• Women frequently cited concern for the children they already had as a reason for abortion
• Nearly all pregnancies were unintended
• Many women reported contraceptive failure
• Several women reported breastfeeding and not realizing they were pregnant
• Several women were pregnant as a result of sexual assault
• One report of a forced pregnancy, several reports of intimate partner violence
• 109 women discussed abortion with another clinician prior to their abortion - only 34 women were told where they could obtain an abortion
• Many women reported feeling judged by other clinicians, protesters
BARRIERS TO ABORTION CARE

- Cost: Selling possessions, Going without electricity Working extra shifts, Borrowing money
- Difficulty taking time off of work
- Lack of transportation to and from the clinic
- Lack of childcare during appointment
- Fear of judgement, stigma
- Personal physical and moral concerns
- Limited access to care (3 clinics with finite resources)
- Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC): Women reported feeling confused by services they offered; felt “bamboozled”
- CPCs in Nebraska do not provide abortions yet appeared online when patients googled “Abortion Services in Nebraska”
U.S. WOMEN Who Have Abortions

- By age 45, about half of American women will have an unintended pregnancy.
- And nearly 1 in 3 will have an abortion.

69% are economically disadvantaged.

6 in 10 already have a child.

88% have their abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

73% are religiously affiliated.

58% are in their 20s.

Ending Stigma
ENDING THE STIGMA

- Abortion rights and reproductive autonomy are critical public health issues.

- **5 P’s**
  - PREVENTION
  - PUBLIC HEALTH
  - PATIENTS
  - PROVIDERS
  - POLICY
Abortion-Contraception Link

“I haven’t seen a woman yet who needed an abortion who wasn’t already pregnant.”

Jocelyn Elders, MD, Former Surgeon General
TEAM EFFORT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

L to R
- Dr. Libby Crockett
- Dr. Valerie French (and baby girl)
- Dr. Renaisa Anthony
- Chelsea Souder, MPH
- Christine Geistkempher, MPH
Referral of women requesting an abortion in Nebraska

V. French
University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

“We usually Just Push for Adoption”: differences in referral for abortion, IVF, ovarian cancer, and high-risk prenatal care among Nebraska clinicians

V. French
University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA
Thank you

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REFERENCES

Enacted 1993, Amended 1996.
3. Guttmacher Institute, State Policies in Brief, April 2015;