



ASN Statement on Supreme Court Decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*

Washington, DC (June 24, 2022)—Casting aside 49 years of precedent and eliminating the constitutional right of millions of Americans to make decisions about their health care, the US Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* has inserted the government between patients and their physicians. The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) strongly denounces this—or any—interference into the practice of medicine that undermines the integrity of the patient-physician relationship.

The Supreme Court’s decision in this case undermines the integrity of the patient-physician relationship, puts patients at risk by limiting their access to evidence-based care, and imposes a greater burden on people with limited access to our health care system, such as historically and economically marginalized and disadvantaged populations.

The vital relationship between a patient and a physician is essential to the provision of safe, appropriate, professional, and high-quality health care. ASN and its members must protect this bond from unnecessary governmental intrusion, and physicians must have the ability to determine appropriate treatment options for their patients based on the best available evidence.

Deaths during childbirth have been increasing in the United States since 2000. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the maternal mortality rate is now nearly three times as high for Black women than the rate for White women. Nearly two-thirds of the 861 pregnancy-related deaths that occurred in the United States in 2020 were considered preventable. The US “maternal mortality rate for 2020 was 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births,” according to CDC. Among industrialized nations, the next highest mortality rate is 8.7 deaths per 100,000 live births in France.

Infants born to people with kidney diseases are 70% more likely to be admitted to a neonatal care unit or die, and pregnant people with kidney diseases are more likely to experience severe health complications, such as preeclampsia and pre-term delivery. Pregnant people with kidney diseases often adapt poorly to the physiologic changes associated with pregnancy, and many experience an irreversible deterioration in their kidney function. Given the high rate of preventable pregnancy-related deaths for people with underlying medical conditions, pregnancy-related decisions must be made between patients and their physicians.

As many as 26 states are now expected to ban all or nearly all abortions—including for pregnancies caused by rape and incest—endangering millions of people. This decision immediately threatens access to some forms of contraception and potentially to fertility treatments in some states. Some states will also allow private citizens to take legal action against physicians, other health professionals, and their fellow neighbors who help people obtain reproductive health care and information.

Reproductive health care decisions should be private matters, made in consultation between a patient and a physician (or qualified health care professional), without interference from the government. ASN opposes any effort to interfere with the practice of medicine, undermine the integrity of the patient-physician relationship, or limit access to our health care system.

(ASN is a member of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, a coalition of 48 specialty societies representing more than 800,000 physician members. This statement is adapted with permission from CMSS's statement on the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*: <https://cmss.org/scotus-dobbs-decision/>.)

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