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#WeCount Reports that 19% of U.S. Abortions are Provided via Telehealth

Over 40,000 people in states with severe abortion bans or telehealth restrictions received medication abortion through shield laws in the latter half of 2023

Denver, CO—The Society of Family Planning released its sixth #WeCount report today, showing that in the 18 months following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision, the number of abortions in the United States remained consistently elevated compared to pre-*Dobbs* levels, even as 14 states have banned abortion completely. This elevated volume of abortion may be due in part to the expansion of telehealth abortion care, which made up 19% of all abortion care nationwide by December 2023. Finally, this report captures, for the first time, that nearly 8,000 people per month in states with bans or severe restrictions accessed medication abortion from clinicians providing via telehealth under shield law protections from October to December 2023.

The #WeCount report found between 87,600 and 92,640 abortions monthly between October-December 2023. Excluding the roughly 8,000 monthly abortions provided under shield laws, the monthly average of abortions in 2023 was 86,000—still higher than the monthly average of 82,000 abortions in 2022.

In the 15 states with total or six-week abortion bans, #WeCount estimates that more than 180,000 abortions would have likely been obtained via providers in these states since *Dobbs*, had abortion not been banned. The states with the greatest cumulative declines in abortion volume over 18 months include Texas, Georgia, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Alabama.

"Even as the total national number of abortions nationally has increased, we can't lose sight of the fact that access to in-person abortion care has virtually disappeared in states where abortion is banned," said **Alison Norris, MD, PhD, #WeCount Co-Chair and professor at The Ohio State University’s College of Public Health and co-principal investigator of the Ohio Policy Evaluation Network**. "The loss of clinic-based care—which makes up more than 80% of abortion care—is a devastating loss to access for people across wide swaths of the country."

The states with the largest cumulative increases, or surges, in abortion volume over the 18 months following *Dobbs* included Illinois, Florida, and California. The surge in abortions provided in Florida is noteworthy given the new law banning abortion after six weeks gestation, enacted May 1, 2024. While most surge states border states with abortion bans, there are also large increases in states that are geographically distant from states with abortion bans, including California, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts. These increased numbers are likely due to people traveling from states

where they cannot access care as well as increased abortions among residents within these states.

Telehealth now makes up a larger proportion of the abortion care landscape than ever before. From October to December 2023, there were about 17,000 telehealth abortions per month, including those provided by brick-and-mortar clinics, virtual-only clinics, and under shield law protections into states with bans on abortion or telehealth.

Five states (Colorado, Massachusetts, New York, Washington, and Vermont) enacted shield laws in 2023, providing legal protections to clinicians in those states who offer abortion care via telehealth into states that have bans on abortion or on telehealth abortion. Telehealth abortions by providers operating under shield law protections averaged 8,000 per month from October to December 2023, making up nearly half of all telehealth abortions counted in #WeCount. From July-December 2023, over 40,000 people in states with total or 6-week bans, and states with telehealth restrictions have accessed medication abortion provided under shield laws—reinforcing that abortion bans do not eliminate the need for abortion care.

“Access to medication abortion through telehealth continues to play an ever-increasing role in abortion care nationwide—even as the Supreme Court weighs the fate of telehealth abortion care.” **Dr. Ushma Upadhyay, #WeCount Co-Chair and professor at the University of California, San Francisco’s Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH).** “The need for abortion care across the country demands that providers, advocates, and lawmakers continue to come together to innovate new strategies to help people access abortion care.”

The full #WeCount report is available [here](#). #WeCount will continue to track data about the number of abortions provided in each state throughout the year.

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*[#WeCount](#) is a time-limited study collecting monthly abortion volume data by state to better understand the impact of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* on abortion access. #WeCount data include clinician-provided abortions, defined as medication or procedural abortions completed by a licensed clinician in a clinic, private medical office, hospital, or virtual-only clinic in the US known to offer abortion care during the period of study. This report does not reflect any self-managed abortions, defined as any attempt to end a pregnancy outside the formal healthcare system.*

The [Society of Family Planning](#) is a source for abortion and contraception science. The Society is a membership organization of over 1,700 scholars, clinicians, and others united around a vision of just and equitable abortion and contraception informed by science.

