



The Board of Trustees of the Columbus Medical Association (CMA) opposes HB 598.

The CMA Board is very well aware of the differing philosophical and ideological perspectives around the issue of abortion. The physician members of the CMA do not all share the same views on abortion.

Our concern today is when well-intentioned and strongly held beliefs lead to new law that does not recognize the medical realities presented by our patients. Wanting circumstances to be different does not make it so. Absolute laws that do not take into account the medical realities presented by a patient places physicians in an untenable position.

Legislation like HB 598 criminalizes physicians for not just providing appropriate standards of medical care, but also for promoting those standards. The requirements for “affirmative defense” are so onerous that physicians trying to save someone’s life through pregnancy termination, must live in fear of being charged with a felony, lose their license, and perhaps go to jail for failing to complete those requirements, few of which seem medically necessary.

It is hard to imagine how difficult it will be to provide legal medical care in situations in which women have no option but to purchase abortion medications on-line and without medical supervision and then start showing up at medical practices and emergency rooms with complications.

This Board strongly supports law and policy to:

- Protect patients and clinicians who provide medically necessary care
- Prevent private citizens from interfering in our patients’ healthcare decisions
- Provide continued access to evidence-based comprehensive care and information
- Protect the integrity of the patient-physician relationship and prevent government overreach and interference into this relationship

As much as some might wish it were not so, there are well established, incontrovertible, medical conditions that require any evidence-based, comprehensive reproductive healthcare provide for all facets of medical care. CMA physician members would be available to discuss the circumstances of these conditions to any policy maker who wishes more details.

As Ohio’s political and legal processes consider of new law for our state, we are reminded that the government goes to great lengths to license and regulate physicians to ensure we practice medicine within well-established professional standards. Creating policy and law that does not recognize evidence-based realities is an unwise and dangerous new standard for our state.

Sugat Patel, MD

President, Columbus Medical Association

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Adopted Unanimously CMA Board Meeting, May 10, 2022

