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TESTIMONY FROM
THE INDIANA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

As the current President and two Past Presidents of the American College of Cardiology (ACC), as well as the current President of the IN Chapter of the ACC, and as practicing cardiologists in Indianapolis, we testify today representing our 27,000 U.S. based cardiovascular (CV) professionals, our 54,000 members worldwide, and our 1032 IN-ACC members. The mission of the ACC is to transform CV care and to improve heart health for all founded on the core values of patient-centeredness, professionalism and excellence, team-based care, and promoting health equity.

The ACC does not have a policy on abortion. But we do advocate for protection of the sanctity of the patient-clinician relationship, the importance of shared clinical decision making between a patient and her provider, and equitable access to all care options to prevent CV mortality and morbidity.

As CV professionals we care for women who have CV illnesses or risks who are pregnant, who may become pregnant, or who develop a CV complication during pregnancy. As you have already heard, Maternal mortality is a significant and growing problem threatening the life and health of many Hoosier mothers. Maternal mortality in the U.S. is twice as high as the next closest developed nation and has increased by 33% during the pandemic. Tragically, IN has the third highest rate of maternal mortality in the U.S.

CV disease is the number one cause of maternal death. In turn, CV complications during pregnancy are leading risk factors for future CV disease in the mother, such as heart attack and stroke later in life. CV conditions are the greatest threat to fetal viability and successful future delivery of a healthy child. CV complications of pregnancy include heart attack, congestive heart failure, severe hypertension, blood clots, tearing or dissection of coronary arteries and the aorta, as well as heart rhythm abnormalities.

The physiologic changes associated with pregnancy place a large stress on even a normal CV system but can precipitate death or serious morbidity in mothers with congenital heart disease, pulmonary hypertension, and other underlying CV illnesses or risks. Accordingly, it is sometimes advised to terminate a pregnancy to protect the life and health of the mother.

In consideration of IN SB-1, the ACC supports the medical exemption that abortion be permitted based on reasonable medical judgment, to prevent a substantial permanent impairment of the life or health of the mother.

Respectfully,

Edward T. A. Fry, MD, FACC, President, American College of Cardiology
Mary N. Walsh, MD, MACC, Past-President, American College of Cardiology
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