In July, the Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision in June Medical v. Russo, striking down Louisiana’s medically unnecessary admitting privileges law. The Court recognized that admitting privilege laws do not improve the health or safety of people who have abortions. Instead, these laws do one thing: they force clinics to close, pushing care further out of reach for patients.

The ruling allowed the state’s three remaining abortion clinics, all of whom are independent clinics and ACN members, to continue to provide abortion care for the people of Louisiana—a victory for patients and providers in the region.

However, with the recent loss of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg and nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to replace her seat, abortion access in the United States is more precarious than ever. Abortion clinics, especially independent clinics like those at the center of the last two Supreme Court cases, need your support to continue this fight.

Judge Barrett has a long history of criticizing Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States. She has even gone as far to say that abortion is “always immoral.” She has consistently voted in favor of abortion restrictions in her time as a federal judge and will without a doubt provide the fifth vote to cut back, if not overturn, Roe v. Wade, eliminating abortion rights in this country if and when given the opportunity.

Those opportunities will continue to present themselves based on numerous cases that are currently in the lower courts. Furthermore, in this year’s June Medical v. Russo victory, the Court did not speak with a clear majority opinion.

Continued on next page...
The Supreme Court: A Shifting Landscape, continued

Chief Justice John Roberts’ separate opinion could muddy the waters when legal clarity is needed to protect abortion rights in future cases.

The reality is we are looking at a near future where abortion access will be dependent on the state you live—with people living in the Midwest and the South being most harmed due to lack of protections for abortion in their own state constitutions. We know that independent clinics will continue to show up and fight for all of us in the courts, the state legislatures, Congress, and in their communities. However, they cannot do this without your help!

INDependent Clinics Adapt and Respond in Crisis

The COVID-19 Pandemic Continues and Indies Show Up

Our world, our nation, and our communities are still facing the uncertainty, instability, and challenges of a healthcare crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This moment is unprecedented, and the need for abortion care has not and will not stop during this pandemic. Our members have risen to the occasion and remain committed to providing compassionate, dignified care.

Independent abortion care providers are resilient. For decades, they have operated in the states most politically hostile to reproductive health, providing care when and where others do not. They are no strangers to providing care during times of crises—and now they are tackling the COVID-19 crisis head on.

“Most abortion clinics operate on tight budgets and, like most of the country, we were not financially prepared for a pandemic. There are not many funding resources available to independent abortion clinics. We are committed to providing care to our communities—but we need help.”

- Mercedes Sanchez (she/her), Cedar River Clinics

» Adjusted Clinic Operations/Services
Independent abortion clinics have adjusted their practices in accordance with COVID-19 guidance; they are following CDC guidelines and clinical best practices to keep patients and staff safe and healthy, as they always have. In some places, clinics may be scaling back or temporarily pausing some services where they see fit. Where laws and capacity allow, other clinics are expanding hours, innovating, and providing care via telemedicine. They are all collectively committed to helping patients find and access abortion care against dire and unprecedented odds.

» Financial Strain
Independent clinics are up against immense financial pressures to keep their doors open and continue to provide care for patients during this pandemic. When we surveyed clinic members, 92% of our clinic members indicated a need for financial support to continue providing care during the pandemic. Independent clinics, many of which are small businesses, need to be able to pay staff, provide paid sick time and family medical leave, and pay their rent and bills.

» Increased Patient Barriers
Clinics are responding to a pandemic that has only increased existing barriers patients face to accessing abortion care. 50% of our clinic members have seen an increase in patient travel to access needed care: barriers include increasingly unpredictable wait times; travel difficulties and restrictions; hotel closures leaving patients without a place to stay; out of pocket costs are increasing; patients are being forced to travel further to seek care.

» State Executive Orders
This summer, elected officials in several states, including Alabama, Iowa, Texas, Ohio, and Oklahoma, exploited the public health emergency to push their anti-abortion agenda and impose severe limits on abortion care. By declaring abortion a “non-essential” service, Executive Orders caused temporary disruptions of services and/or several lawsuits. These actions showed just how far anti-abortion extremists will go to push abortion care out of reach. The fact is, abortion care is essential, time-sensitive healthcare and should be treated as such.
AJ Haynes is a patient advocate at Hope Medical Group in Shreveport, LA, and the frontwoman of Seratones. As a frontline staff person at Hope, AJ is an ACN member—but she’s also a donor, having held two online benefit concerts for Keep Our Clinics this year. We sat down to talk with her about performing on the steps of the Supreme Court, her work as an independent abortion provider, and her take on funding abortion care.

ACN: In your own words, what do you do at Hope Medical Group?

AJ: I am a patient advocate at Hope Medical Group in Shreveport, Louisiana. I make sure patients have a comprehensive understanding of their options regarding abortion, but I also find myself doing a lot of sex education. I do what I can to help them work through the emotional part—every person’s needs are different. I come from a place of inviting them into conversation and ask questions that they’ve been embarrassed to ask or haven’t had time to ask. The biggest part of what I do is listen.

ACN: You performed your song “Power” on the steps of the Supreme Court on the day of oral arguments in the June Medical v. Russo case. What was it like to perform on the steps of the Supreme Court?

AJ: There was a lot of steady excitement and anticipation as we kicked off the day. I felt a juxtaposition of being nervous about the possible court decision with the calm of being at home with your people.

Part of what’s changed my life about working in abortion care is finding people who feel like family. Being in this movement, we’re allowed to show up as who we are. It felt like being home; it felt like a family reunion on the courthouse steps. I find that these songs can be either a meditation or a rallying cry—in this case it was a little bit of both. I hope that this song was a way to say: this is our space and we’re going to be here with really intentional strength.

ACN: What do you want people to know about abortion care in Louisiana and in general?

AJ: Honestly, I think that patients get better treatment at independent abortion clinics than they get in almost any other clinical setting. At Hope Medical Group, we acknowledge the complicated and deeply racist history of gynecology; when we’re with patients, we’re thinking about all these problematic histories that inform the inherited traumas that we’re all managing.

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“Our abortion clinic is a really sacred place. Abortion IS sacred. Every person’s reason is valid and every person’s reason is unique. Abortion is really normal and a lot of people have them.”

- AJ Haynes

FACEBOOK/ABORTIONCARENETWORK | TWITTER @ABORTIONCARE
Abortion Care Network’s
Reproductive Health Education Curriculum

Professional growth is essential to job satisfaction and increasing employee retention. However, professional development training can be costly and time-consuming for many small businesses. In addition, frontline staff at clinics—employees who spend the bulk of their time with patients—receive fewer opportunities for professional development training compared to licensed clinical staff at these same clinics.

Abortion Care Network has partnered with Bixby Innovating Education in Reproductive Health to create Abortion Care Network’s Reproductive Health Education Curriculum which provides professional development training to all clinic staff including clinic managers, physicians, frontline staff, clinic board members, volunteers, and interns. ACN understands the importance of all clinic staff having the opportunity to receive access to evidence-based abortion care information and all other reproductive health educational materials. ACN hopes that this new membership benefit will decrease the burden for each independent abortion clinic to have to research, vet and pay for professional development.

If you would like to learn more on how to start the curriculum, please reach out to Program Manager Mia Peake (she/her) at mia@abortioncarenetwork.org

Interview with AJ Haynes, continued

We don’t try to explain what our patients are going through TO them. We want them to be informed, which is not typically what happens in a clinical setting. Usually things are explained AT you, and we try not to do that. We respond with compassion and allow people to feel how they feel. The way that we treat our patients is quite frankly how everyone should be treated.

Our abortion clinic is a really sacred place. Abortion IS sacred. Every person’s reason is valid and every person’s reason is unique. Abortion is really normal and a lot of people have them.

ACN: You are both an ACN member and an ACN fundraiser. Why is raising money for independent clinics important to you?

AJ: We want to be able to raise our families in safe and sustainable communities. And we want to be able to envision and follow through with that dream—but hard to envision and shape your future when you don’t have access to the things you need. In a lot of ways, investing in abortion care is a way for us to invest in our future.

Supporting independent abortion clinics and abortion funds is radical wealth distribution. If you really want to fight these power structures that keep people poor, this is the most direct way to do it. It’s not a stretch to say that you’re helping your community directly by supporting independent abortion care providers.

ACN: You’ve held two benefit concerts for independent abortion clinics since the pandemic began. What would you tell someone who wants to support clinics and patients but isn’t sure where to start or doesn’t have a lot of money?

AJ: Fundraising is not only important to get money to our clinics, but also helps create a culture of change by integrating our strengths into the movement. My strength is entertainment and music, so that’s how I show up. If you have money, that may be how you show up. If you have other talents, that can be how you show up.

It’s important to invest in our independent clinics because we need the support, but in addition to financial support, the culture of this movement should reflect what we look like and represent our lived experiences—it’s not boring! Fundraising not only cultivates that culture, but also puts money where it needs to go.
Independent abortion care providers are where three out of five patients in the United States go for abortion care. Our members bring exceptional care to communities throughout the country, but they often have little access to the financial resources they need.

While all indies struggle to compete with bigger entities like Planned Parenthood for funding, there is also an uneven playing field between nonprofit clinics and small business clinics when it comes to access to resources. In particular, small businesses often lack the infrastructure necessary to raise funds.

In an effort to support our member clinics and help level the playing field, ACN has created Keep Our Clinics; the first nationwide centralized public-facing fundraising campaign for independent abortion providers. Funding is available to support indie abortion providers in the following areas: preserving access, legal assistance, and education/advocacy.

During this pandemic and beyond, protecting access to essential care is our main priority. Your support is vital to our members’ ability to meet every patient’s time-sensitive needs and ensure that providers are fully equipped to provide care and respond to urgent demands. Learn more and make a donation at KeepOurClinics.org

TO DATE, YOU’VE HELPED US RAISE OVER $220,000, WHICH HAS BEEN RELEASED TO:

- Pay the essential workers on staff who are keeping abortion accessible during this pandemic
- Cover mounting legal fees to fight essential court battles
- Make necessary security improvements that will help keep both patients and staff safe from anti-choice extremists
- Support physicians traveling to provide abortion care in some of the most hostile states
- Pay rent and purchase necessary supplies to keep patients and staff safe during this pandemic

SAVE THESE DATES!

- **NOVEMBER 3, 2020**
  - Election Day
    - State & Local Races - Please Vote!
- **NOVEMBER 19, 2020**
  - Give to the Max Day
    - $5,000 Matching Grant
- **JANUARY 22, 2021**
  - 48th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade
- **MARCH 10, 2021**
  - Abortion Provider Appreciation Day
During a pandemic and always, Abortion Care Network supports independent, community-based abortion care providers to ensure they are able to provide excellent care to the individuals, families, and communities they serve.

Double your impact!

Supporting independent abortion clinics and abortion funds is radical wealth distribution. If you really want to fight these power structures that keep people poor, this is the most direct way to do it. It’s not a stretch to say that you’re helping your community directly by supporting independent abortion care providers.” - AJ Haynes

Read the full interview with AJ inside!

We have a $5,000 matching grant on all contributions made now through November 19th!

Join us: AbortionCareNetwork.org/donate