

Medical Students for Choice

UNCATEGORIZED

FAMILY PLANNING IN LOUISIANA: DR. RASHONDA DEAN

APRIL 26, 2017 | PAIGE BRADLEY

Dr. Rashonda Dean came to Tulane today and spoke about her experiences as an abortion provider in Louisiana. Dr. Dean is a graduate of Tulane University, School of Medicine and did her OB/GYN residency at LSU-HSC. At the time of her training, there was no formal training in abortion care during residency. She worked with other abortion providers to learn the procedures and now provides abortion services up to 19 weeks and 4 days.

Lack of providers as a barrier to abortion

When Dr. Dean started medical school, there were 10 clinics in the state of Louisiana. Now there are only has **3 clinics**, with *5 providers* to serve Louisiana women. Even though getting an abortion is a safe

and legal procedure, in areas where there are no providers the procedure may well be illegal because women cannot access care. Many abortion providers are worried that due to increasing regulations, medical students will not be interested in learning how to provide an abortion.

Becoming an abortion ally

Dr. Dean told a story about a woman who was suffering from medical complications and needed an abortion to save her life. However, staff that would normally assist with this doctor's procedures (anesthesiologist, scrub tech, nurse) would not help because this was an abortion. That doctor ended up sending their patient to Dr. Dean's clinic because they knew this patient would receive compassionate care. While at an MSFC conference back in December, the term "abortion ally" was discussed. What is an abortion ally? An abortion ally is someone who *does not provide abortions*, but can help the provider in doing their work. Examples of abortion allies:

- **Hospitalists (or any physician)** who reach out to the local abortion provider and tells them they will admit any complicated patients to their hospital
- **Medical school faculty** who no longer practice but reach out to the national MSFC leadership to incorporate abortion care into

the curriculum

- **Landlords** who will not be intimidated by protestors and allow independent abortion providers to maintain their practice
- **Clinic escorts** who are volunteers that help walk women to the clinic amidst protestors
- **Faith leaders**, such as groups like **Catholics for Choice** and the **National Council of Jewish Women**, who help spread the moral argument for choice
 - Did you know that the original abortion rights movement, prior to *Roe v. Wade*, started in the Baptist faith? Church leaders, tired of presiding over funerals of women who were victims of illegal abortion, decided to create a network where women could get connected to legitimate physicians who would perform safe, although secret, abortion procedures.
- Bottom line: **EVERYONE CAN BE AN ABORTION ALLY** 😊