

As An Ob-Gyn, I Know Women Deserve Better Than Trump's America

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The afternoon of November 8th, I felt elated. My co-resident and I had successfully placed an IUD in a frightened 17 year-old in need of emergency contraception, preventing an unwanted teen pregnancy. And, a woman was about to be elected president.

The next day, as I stared numbly at my computer at 6:30am in the pre-operative charting room, I struggled to keep my mind focused on the surgeries I was going to perform that day.

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My senior resident, a woman of unflappable composure in even the most dire emergencies, walked into the room. We looked at each other, embraced, and cried. This strong surgeon, mother, and mentor briefly cracked under the weight of the visceral grief we shared.

Grief for her half-Ethiopian children who would be targeted as "others" by President-elect Trump's divisive and dangerous rhetoric; for so many of our patients who will lose their health insurance if Trump (and now Tom Price, nominee to lead Health and Human Services) manages to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act; for women and girls around the country who saw their dreams of seeing an unimaginably qualified woman in the White House dashed by a misogynist.

But in that moment, she squeezed my shoulders, wiped her tears, and said, “Let’s take great care of our ladies today.” And that’s what we did.

As an Obstetrics and Gynecology intern working 80 hours a week in the hospital, it’s easy to shut out news I don’t want to hear and put the rest of the world on pause. I can’t do that. We can’t do that.

When a Hispanic woman I saw in clinic shortly after the election felt it necessary to tell me that she was a U.S. citizen, I felt my heart sink. No one should have to justify their right to care, especially not while sitting vulnerably on an exam bed in a paper gown.

Politics is not ephemeral. It affects real people. As a Jewish woman and future abortion provider, I share her anxiety.

We cannot quietly go back to a time when 20 million more people were uninsured and even more women lacked access to reproductive services, prenatal care, birth control, and cancer screening. Future Ob-Gyn residents should not have to train at a time when women once again die daily of sepsis from botched illegal abortions.

As women’s health care providers, we cannot stand on the sidelines and watch while *Roe v. Wade* and Title X funding — which supports vital family planning services for the most vulnerable women in our population — rest on the chopping block. If any one of Trump’s proposed conservative nominees to the Supreme Court are confirmed, we will be fighting once again to preserve a woman’s constitutional right to make her own healthcare choices.

We must resist the tendency to be shocked into numb complacency by the daily onslaught of inexcusable statements on the part of our now President-elect. We cannot disengage out of fear or disillusionment.

If given the opportunity, this administration will wage a war on women’s health and we have to show up to fight it. In states like Ohio, where Governor John Kasich recently signed a bill into law banning abortion after 20 weeks with no exceptions for rape or incest, this battle has already begun.

The women's health community must continue to come together to stand up for women and to ensure our voices are not ignored. We are less than two weeks away from the inauguration. It's time to channel our grief not only into compassionate care for the women we serve, but also into action for the world we all share.

When the nomination fights begin, we must take a small amount of time to place calls to our elected officials and share stories of the women we serve. For those who can, make time to go to a town hall meeting. Stay engaged in state and local politics. Know who your representatives are and what they're doing with their elected offices.

Every baby I deliver reminds me of who we're fighting for. This is their future. They deserve better than Trump's America, and so do we.

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