



**“As physicians, we need to share our stories.**

By doing so, we will lessen the stigma of abortion. For our patients, and our fellow doctors.”

Linda Prine, MD

## Provider Voices

As physicians, we believe that speaking about abortion helps remove the stigma that has been attached to it by anti-choice politicians and organizations. Physicians for Reproductive Health compiles personal accounts from our doctors across the country that explain why they are committed to preserving reproductive rights, improving access to comprehensive reproductive health care, and providing respectful, safe, and compassionate care to women seeking abortion. We honor our physicians and their work, and we want to share their stories with you.

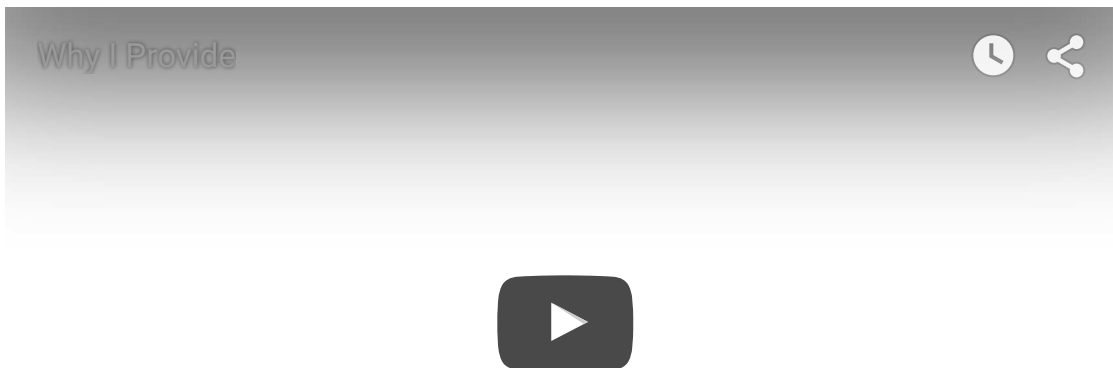
### **OUR PHYSICIANS' VOICES:**

June 5, 2015

### **Our New Video: “Why I Provide”**

This spring, we undertook the mission of adding a new chapter to our wildly popular publication, [Why I Provide](#), which was originally published in 2004. For this update, we teamed up with producer/director Linda Porto to film five physicians in our network as they spoke about their lives, their careers, and their motivations: Dr. Jennifer Amico, Dr. Bhavik Kumar, Dr. Gillian Dean, Reproductive Health Advocacy Fellow Dr. Kathleen Morrell, and board member Dr. Willie Parker.

This five-minute video highlights why each of them considers it an honor and a privilege to be an abortion provider and continue this vital work, despite mounting restrictions and threats to their safety. We hope you enjoy watching it as much as we enjoyed making it.



May 31, 2015

## Remembering Dr. Tiller



Six years ago, we lost a dear friend, a brilliant and compassionate physician, and a true hero. Dr. George Tiller was murdered at his church by an anti-choice extremist. While we will never fully be able to forget the tragic loss of this day, we also will take the opportunity to celebrate Dr. Tiller's life and work and share the ways in which he inspired and touched us all.

Our memories of Dr. Tiller are still quite vivid. Here are a few videos and written profiles that offer a small snapshot of the incredible and brave physician that he was:

[Video](#): Dr. Tiller talks about how he became a provider

[Video](#): Dr. Tiller explains why he continued his work, despite repeated harassment and violence

[Video](#): *Voices of Choice*, our documentary about pre-Roe abortion providers, featuring Dr. Tiller


[Oral history](#): "I have more to be grateful for than I have to be resentful about."

[Profile](#): A 1998 portrait of Dr. Tiller

March 9, 2015

## 2015 Leadership Training Academy Fellows: Why I Provide

March 10 is the *National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers*. March 10 is the day in 1993 when David Gunn, MD, was murdered by an anti-choice extremist. To honor the courageous doctors who provide this much-needed service and to fight the stigma surrounding this safe, legal medical care, members of our current *Leadership Training Academy* class share their stories of why they provide and why they support their colleagues who provide.

 **Dr. Serina Floyd** Why do I provide abortions? Because women need them. Because if I didn't, there would be one less person who understands and is willing to care for the woman who finds herself pregnant at a time when she is not ready for a(nother) child.

One less person who can be there to support and provide care to the woman who discovers complications with her pregnancy. One less person who can provide compassionate care to the woman who is pregnant as a result of sexual assault. Why do I provide abortions? Because I consider it an honor and a privilege to be a part of a woman's life when she has to make such an important decision. Why do I provide abortions? Because I care.

**Serina Floyd, MD, MSPH**

**Alexandria, VA**

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Those of us who choose to assist women in this way do it because we can't imagine not doing it. We think it is unethical to do otherwise. We do it, not because it is glamorous or because we expect to be glorified, but because we care deeply about women and trust their family planning decisions.

**Nicole Fanarjian, MD, MSCR**

**Sarasota, FL**

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Every day, women must navigate innumerable and sometimes insurmountable barriers to access abortion care. I provide abortions to support women and families during their most vulnerable times. I provide abortions to help preserve women's basic human right to control their bodies and reproduction.

**Kate Whitehouse, DO**

**Honolulu, HI**






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We all face situations in life that we don't expect or deserve. The decision to become a parent, and under what circumstances, is life-altering and deeply personal. For me, there is nothing in medicine more gratifying than helping women take control of their reproductive lives so that they can become parents when ready, and have access to birth control and safe abortion when not.

**Katie Simmons, MD**

**Portland, OR**



I believe in public health interventions that provide simple solutions to human suffering. As oral rehydration therapy and vaccines have been powerful, successful public health interventions, so too has been safe abortion. Universal access to contraception and safe abortion services are fundamental issues of social justice, and I am proud to participate in improving access to these services through advocacy, research, and providing my patients with the health care they need.

**Lisa Goldthwaite, MD**

**Denver, CO**

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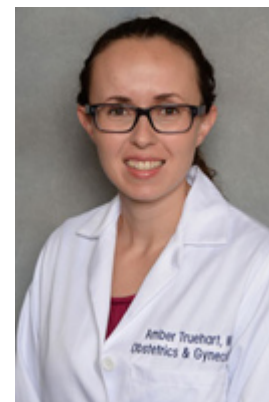
Physicians should never deny their patients care. I provide abortions because it is the right thing to do. My hope for the future is that I will be able to talk about providing abortions as openly as doctors in other areas of medicine can talk about their work.

**Anonymous**

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When I was a teenager, my sister became pregnant. She was not ready to become a parent and the nearest abortion clinic was several hours away.

I had only had my driver's license for a few months when I drove farther away from my hometown than I had ever been, to ensure my sister could have an abortion. I held her hand during the whole drive and silently vowed to do everything in my power to make sure that one day nobody had to experience a drive like that. One of the ways I stay true to that promise is by providing abortions.



Abortion care needs to not only be safe and legal, it also needs to be *accessible*.

**Amber Truehart, MD**

**Chicago, IL**



I am a comprehensive reproductive health care physician. Abortion care is a small, but profoundly impactful service that I provide for my patients. I am proud to be a trained and skilled physician working to increase access to abortion for women and their families.

**Emily Schneider, MD**

**Albuquerque, NM**

I provide abortions because it's the right thing to do. I am a family medicine doctor and abortion is part of the routine care that I can offer my patients. Knowing my patient, and often their family as well, I want to fully support them when they face an unplanned pregnancy. When a patient decides to continue a pregnancy, I can provide prenatal care. When a patient decides not to continue a pregnancy, I can provide abortion care.

Providing abortion care is a moral, just, and ethical part of being a family physician. Providing abortion care has taught me that my patients know what's best for them and to trust their decisions.

Providing abortion care has made me a better physician and I am thankful for that.



**Bhavik Kumar, MD**

**New York, NY**

I provide full-spectrum reproductive health care as a family physician because I want to be able to provide my pregnant patients with the care they need both when they are ready to be pregnant and when they are not. I aim to break down health care barriers for women and expand access to safe reproductive health care. I provide abortion care because it is every woman's right to have control over her future.

**Zahra Virani, MD**

**New York, NY**

I am a simple person. It is simple tenets that motivate me: Beneficence, Autonomy, and Humanism are my driving forces. They motivate me to get up in the morning and allow me to rest at night in peace.

So providing is, in some ways, about me. It is about how caring for women and empowering them to have better lives makes me feel fulfilled and content. It is how spending even a short time with a woman can make her life better forever. How I get to have a mission and live it every day. How no matter how bleak it may be outside, how wrong things might be going in the world, when I leave work, I believe I have made the world a better place. That is why I provide and I am grateful for the opportunity to do so.

**Roslyn Kade, MD****Cincinnati, OH**

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I support my patient if she chooses to continue her pregnancy, and I support my patient if she chooses abortion. Whatever her decision is, it is important to me that I am able to provide her with comprehensive reproductive health care, and that includes providing abortions.

**Melissa Chen, MD, MPH****Sacramento, CA**

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In society, abortion remains a polarizing subject, burdened by controversy, stigma, silence and shame. I see the profound impact of these social messages when I sit with women navigating decisions about pregnancy. But, my patients are thoughtful about their lives and capable of making decisions that are difficult and complex by reflecting on their health and the needs of their families. As a doctor, I know abortion is a valid, common and safe option for women. And for me, performing abortions is a moral imperative. Like other aspects of my clinical work, abortion calls on my compassion, my hope, my kindness, my humanity and my integrity. I provide comprehensive reproductive health care to challenge the messages women hear about their options, their worth, and their bodies when it comes to pregnancy. Abortion care is my platform for patient advocacy and I'm proud to be an abortion provider.

**Natalie Whaley, MD, MPH****Baltimore, MD**

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I became an obstetrician/gynecologist because I liked being the person my friends confided in when it pertained to sensitive subjects related to sexual and reproductive health. I loved providing information and unconditional support. My work is an extension of that commitment. I value being the person women come to when they need comprehensive reproductive health care and I take pride in having the knowledge and skills to attend to those needs.

**Anna Altshuler, MD, MPH****Stanford, CA**

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I provide because there is a need. Women need safe abortions in kind environments. I provide because I believe that physicians should put patients first and be a source of comfort and service in their most vulnerable moments. I provide because my conscience compels me to.



**Valerie French, MD**

**San Francisco, CA**

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As an obstetrician, I provide abortion care as part of comprehensive pregnancy-related health care. My job and goal are to maximize the health and lives of the women I take care of. Just like management of labor and delivery, abortion care is a fundamental part of women's reproductive health care, and its provision helps optimize the health of women in our society.

### **Anonymous**

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I provide so that women have a choice. I grew up in a small town where no one discussed contraception and certainly not abortion – sex ed was abstinence-only. I watched many girls who gave birth at a young age experience stigma for having gotten pregnant in the first place. When I moved to a city I thought things would be different. But all through college, medical school and residency, I encountered people who judged women for their sexual behavior and reproductive decisions.

I believe in a world where women are able to make informed health decisions without stigma and judgment. Women should have the power to decide if and when to become a parent. As a physician, I have the ability to help women. I provide because I owe it to them to do so.



### **Crystal Goldsmith, MD, MS**

**Los Angeles, CA**

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March 6, 2015

## **Remembering Dr. Millie Hanson**

*“Providing abortion is as much a part of medical care as delivering babies and doing appendectomies and treating sore throats. It’s an integral part of medical care....It is not something that should be stigmatized. It should be a part of general and total medical care.” — Dr. Millie Hanson, in 2004*

We are saddened to hear of the passing of our dear friend and esteemed colleague, Dr. Mildred “Millie” Hanson.

Dr. Hanson began her career in 1959 as an ob/gyn resident at a Minnesota hospital, caring for women who were septic from illegal abortions and had fevers as high as 107. “If you saw the distress of the women who wanted abortions and saw the morbidity and

mortality rates of illegal abortion, and the number of unwanted pregnancies, it was obvious that something needed to be done,” Dr. Hanson said.



Dr. Hanson at the Rashbaum Awards ceremony with friend and award presenter, Dr. George Tiller

Dr.



Dr. Millie Hanson at the 2008 Rashbaum Awards

Hanson was one of the pre-Roe doctors featured in our documentary, [Voices of Choice](#). You can [watch her interview and read a transcript here](#). In 2008, Physicians honored Dr. Hanson with our [William K. Rashbaum Abortion Provider Award](#). She truly exemplified the spirit of the award, as a doctor who provided outstanding abortion services and served as an inspirational leader for colleagues, residents, and medical students.

Dr. Hanson noted that the harassment she and her colleagues experienced paled in comparison to what her patients encountered: “We experience some harassment... It bothers my staff and me, but what I really object to is the impact on our patients. When women are queried as to what was most difficult about their abortion — making the decision, pain during or after the procedure — they almost always say being exposed to the harassment.”

She believed that we all have to work to lift the stigma of abortion. In an interview from 2001, Dr. Hanson said: “Young clinicians must realize that abortion must be a part of mainstream health care. However, we have not yet erased the stigma that is attached to being an abortion provider.”

However, Dr. Hanson worked hard to eliminate that stigma: she devoted her career to speaking out, to championing reproductive rights, and to improving patient care. Observing a lack of providers in her area, she saw patients from North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin as well as Minnesota.

She had seen the dark days, pre-Roe, and hoped for a better future for women and providers alike. “[Abortion] is a part of mainstream medical care, and I think when that kind of thinking becomes a part of our mission, as far as what we do as doctors, I think that then we will see the stigma removed.”

Today, Physicians President and CEO Jodi Magee remarked: “Millie was an ardent advocate and skilled practitioner who understood what seeking an abortion meant to a woman. Her recollection, in our [Voices of Choice](#) documentary, of a young woman who committed suicide, breaks my heart every time I see it. And it is clear it broke hers, still so many years after the incident.”



As we mourn the loss of Dr. Hanson, we must keep her memory alive by working to make her vision a reality. Thank you, Dr. Hanson, for being a champion of reproductive rights, an innovative practitioner, and a cherished friend and colleague.

We feel honored to have known her.

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