



2014 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.

I provide abortions because I trust every woman to make the best reproductive health care decisions for herself and her family. The decision to become a parent is one of the most important decisions people make in their life. As a mother and an obstetrician-gynecologist, I don't believe pregnancy or parenthood should be forced on anyone. Abortion is an important part of caring for women, because 1 in 3 women will have an abortion in her lifetime. It is a true privilege and honor to provide compassionate, high quality care to women throughout all stages of life.

Lisa Bayer, MD

Portland, OR

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I provide abortions because I am a compassionate physician who respects the health and dignity of women and families. I provide abortions because I believe healthcare is a human right. I believe that safe, accessible comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion, has the power to positively change lives and strengthen communities. I provide abortions because as a physician, a woman, a daughter, a partner and an aunt it is the right thing for me to do.

Erin Berry-Bibee, MD**Atlanta, GA**
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We live in a world that is glaringly unequal, and it is most unequal for women.

Until all women have unfettered access to contraception,

Until all women live free from violence in their relationships,

Until all women are truly valued in their communities,

Until all women have access to education and opportunity,

Until all women can experience pregnancy without fear and desperation,

Until all women can have healthy pregnancies,

Until all women are ready for the importance of motherhood,

Until we live in that perfect world, I will provide abortions.

Christy Boraas, MD, MPH**Pittsburgh, PA**
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I provide abortions because years ago someone provided one for me. Then, I was treated with gentleness and dignity. I knew I was in good hands. Now, I strive to provide the same high level of compassionate medical care for my patients.

Gillian Dean, MD, MPH**New York, NY**
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Providing abortions is and always will be an essential part of being a comprehensive reproductive health care provider. There will always be unwanted pregnancies, pregnancies with devastating fetal anomalies, and women too ill to carry pregnancies to term. There will always be birth control failure, reproductive coercion, and sexual assault. It is these difficult moments in a woman's life when she needs high-quality and compassionate medical care the most. As an ob/gyn, it is my duty and privilege to be there for my patients through these difficult times.

Luu Ireland, MD, MPH**Los Angeles, CA**
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I provide because of the patients. I've always had a strong belief that reproductive freedoms allow a woman to take control of her future and her life circumstances. Despite the challenges and roadblocks I've encountered because of what I do, when a patient grabs my hand at the end of a procedure, locks eyes with me and says "thank you," I know that I will never walk away from providing.

Stephanie Long, MD

San Francisco, CA

Three events in my life set me on the path to becoming an abortion provider: The first was the moment in college when I thought I was pregnant and knew, without a doubt, that I would have an abortion. The March for Women's Lives, which took place a few months before I started medical school, and showed me how important reproductive choice is to women all over the country. And finally, Medical Students for Choice, who first made me aware of the shortage of abortion providers in the US.

The reason why I continue to provide within the context of being a full-spectrum family doctor is selfish: Because it's the best part of my week. Providing abortion care allows me to normalize a stigmatized experience for my patients, and helps me empower women to exercise reproductive choice.

Sarah McNeil, MD

Berkeley, CA

I provide abortions because comprehensive patient- and family-centered health care is a human right. Women and their loved ones deserve the ability to make decisions that will positively affect their lives, be it continuing a pregnancy to parent, adoption, or choosing an abortion. I provide because my goal as a physician is to support each patient and her decision. I provide abortion care because marginalization of a safe, legal medical procedure is fundamentally wrong and unjust to women.

Rupa Natarajan, MD

New York, NY

I have read the original "[Why I Provide](#)" pamphlet every day since medical school and it has inspired and motivated me through many difficult times.

I feel deeply, morally called to be an abortion provider because in no other field of medicine are the patients more maligned, judged, and stigmatized. Being an abortion provider allows me to be a physician in the truest sense. I am able to

provide comfort and healing to women on a spiritual and physical level. I consider it to be the single most compassionate and fulfilling procedure a physician can provide for women.

Elizabeth Schmidt, MD

St. Louis, MO

There is a stereotype that good doctors don't provide abortions, and that is precisely the problem. I consider myself a good doctor, one of many good doctors who provide abortions so that people and their families can remain in good health. As an obstetrician-gynecologist, I take pride in providing reproductive health care across its full spectrum— from helping those who want to be pregnant but can't conceive, to those who are pregnant but don't want to be. I have the great privilege of helping people make healthy families. I am humbled to be someone people come to for help because they know I will provide safe, compassionate and empathetic care. People seek medical care often in times of duress and I adhere to the four principles of medical ethics very seriously when helping people: beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and autonomy. Providing abortion care encompasses all of these ethical principles and is an important part of standard medical care. I choose to provide this very important, life-changing and safe aspect of standard medical care because I trust my patients to know what is right for them.

Leah Torres, MD

Salt Lake City, UT

I cannot imagine practicing as an obstetrician-gynecologist without providing abortions. It is by far one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. Providing abortion care with respect, honor and compassion is such a privilege. As a physician, I feel a strong conviction to advocate for women's autonomy, and for the fundamental right to safe, legal, and accessible abortion. As a society, we have to trust women to make the health care decisions that are best for them and their families.

Meredith Warden, MD, MPH

San Francisco, CA

The following stories are from providers who wish to remain anonymous:

I provide...

Because of the stories

Because I can leave my judgment and the noise of the day at the door
Because it's part of taking care of women and not everyone thinks so
Because it's the right thing to do and not everyone thinks so

It is an absolute honor and privilege to care for a woman during a time in her life when she is feeling most vulnerable, whether it be during the birth of her child or it be for her abortion. As an OB/GYN, I provide abortions because I believe comprehensive reproductive health care is a right and should be easily accessible, without judgment. It is incredibly rewarding to provide a service that helps a woman build her family in the way that she feels is best.

I provide abortions because I am a family physician. Why wouldn't I? How could I not? When patients are facing an unintended pregnancy, I can't imagine telling them to go elsewhere if they make the deeply personal decision to terminate. We discuss their options, and I tell them I'll be their doctor no matter what they decide to do. I offer them the most up-to-date, evidence-based information without judgment, just as I do when they come to me for their sore throat, their asthma, or their child's vaccines. Providing abortions is just another part of providing care for my patients as a family doctor.

As an abortion provider in an intensely conservative state, I often get asked why I do the work I do. Why deal with the fallout, the safety concerns, the protestors, the snubs from colleagues and nurses in the hospital who know about my "other" job? Because I care about women, and I care about children. Women deserve the opportunity to start and grow their families at a time in their life that they can truly care for them, or the opportunity to not start a family at all. Children deserve to be loved, wanted, cared for, and cherished.
I provide abortions because I care about families.

I provide abortions because as a pediatrician and a mother, I want every child to be born wanted and into a loving and prepared family. Parenting is incredibly difficult, and perhaps the most important decision that anyone can make. My job is to support young women and their families in whatever they decide to do, and offer them whatever services they need, without judgment or coercion.
This is what I do and this is why I provide.

I provide because I have friends and family who have needed safe, legal abortion.
And you do too.

- [2014 Leadership Training Academy Fellows: Why I Provide](#)
- [2013 Leadership Training Academy Fellows: Why I Provide](#)

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