

Abortion remains legal, accessible in Oregon in wake of Supreme Court ruling

June 24, 2022



Following a U.S. Supreme Court decision today that overturns *Roe vs. Wade*, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is reminding people that abortion remains legal in the state.

The Reproductive Health Equity Act (RHEA) was established in 2017 after the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3391. The landmark legislation contained multiple provisions to both protect and expand access to the full scope of reproductive health services, including abortion, for all people in Oregon. RHEA enshrined into state law an individual's right to receive an abortion, as well as a health care provider's right to provide an abortion.

"The decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe vs. Wade* does not change the fact that people in Oregon are guaranteed the right to receive abortion services, which remain legal in this state," said OHA Director Patrick Allen. "OHA will continue to implement and promote RHEA to ensure that people in Oregon have access to essential reproductive health services, including abortion, sterilization and contraceptives, without any barriers."

This includes a legal right for anyone who comes to Oregon for an abortion, not just Oregon residents.

While the abortion rate has declined across the country in the last 30 years, the need for abortion care has recently been on the rise, according to Guttmacher Institute, which found the abortion rate increased by 7% from 2017 to 2020. In Oregon, the abortion rate declined by 21% during this time.

Oregon is one of 16 states and the District of Columbia that has laws that protect the right to abortion, and is just one of four states and the District of Columbia that has ensured the right to abortion without any restrictions or state interference. Oregon also is one of only seven states that funds abortions, using state general funds under the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), the state's Medicaid program, without any restrictions.

In 2017, RHEA further expands access to abortion by requiring health benefit plans regulated by the state of Oregon to cover abortion services without any cost sharing to its members. It also provides coverage for abortion services for people not eligible for the Oregon Health Plan because of their immigration status, including those with DACA status, those with no documentation, and people with legal permanent resident status who have not met the five-year waiting period for OHP eligibility.

And abortion access will continue to expand with the Oregon Legislature's passage earlier this year of House Bill 5202, which allocates \$15 million in state general funds to advancing reproductive health equity. The funds will be distributed by OHA to Seeding Justice, a grant-making organization, to establish the Reproductive Health Equity Fund, which will invest in culturally specific health outreach and education programs around the state that benefit patients, health care providers and community advocates.

Individuals can access free or low-cost reproductive health services at local health departments, Planned Parenthood clinics, federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics across the state. To find a clinic, visit: healthoregon.org/rhclinics, dial 211, or text HEALTH to 898211.