The College Student Right to Access Act

The College Student Right to Access Act, or SB 24, would ensure that all students at public California universities have access to medication abortion at their campus health center.

BACKGROUND AND NEED
Currently, none of the student health centers at California’s public universities provide medication abortion services. The College Student Right to Access Act would require all on-campus student health centers at public universities to offer medication abortion for students by January 1, 2023.

Recent research\(^1\) estimates that every month 1,038 students at the 34 University of California and California State University campuses seek abortions from off-site health care facilities, including many who return to campus to complete their medication abortion. Students must travel to an unknown provider, often without reliable means of transportation. Even within the same city, public transportation can take hours and, in many cases, students need to travel out of their city, county, or even geographic region to access services. This process can be cost prohibitive and time intensive and may require students to miss class or work obligations.

Delays and difficulties in accessing affordable, safe, and early abortion care disproportionately interfere with the academic success and well-being of female students and particularly impact students of color and low-income students for whom reliable transportation and a flexible work schedule is less accessible.

Between 322 and 519 students each month would be able to receive their care on campus if their health centers provided medication abortion.

Polling shows 60% of likely voters and 72% of women in California agree students should be able to access the abortion pill on campus\(^1\). A 2018 study of student perspectives about on-campus abortion found that 64% of students feel campus health centers should provide abortion, and 24% (erroneously) believe the service is already offered.

IMPLEMENTATION
Medication abortion is safer and less complicated than much of the care already offered at university student health centers, including diabetes management, mental health care, or diagnosis/treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that there is no special facility requirement needed to provide medication abortion, and that associated risks are “both low and

\(^1\) UCSF, School of Medicine, Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health. Assessing barriers to medication abortion among California’s public university students. 2017
similar in magnitude to the reported risks of serious adverse effects of commonly used prescription and over-the-counter medications.2

A UCSF study3 found that all student health centers at public universities have the minimum requirements for medication abortion provision: a private exam room, ability to do pregnancy testing and counseling, and clinicians who are licensed in the state of California. In California, medication abortion can be provided by any licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified nurse midwife.

Providing medication abortion requires four steps:
- confirming that the pregnancy is not ectopic and no more than 10 weeks gestational age;
- affirming that abortion is the patient’s decision for how to manage the pregnancy;
- providing a set of pills with instructions for use; and
- instructing the patient on what to expect and how to access care in the event of an emergency.

The patient can take the first pill in the company of the provider. The second set of pills are used by the patient 24-48 hours later where and when they choose. Most patients can return to normal activities within 1-2 days. A follow-up appointment with the provider is made for 1-2 weeks after the initial appointment to confirm successful termination of pregnancy.

According to medical experts, all clinical staff can be trained in managing post-abortion follow-up care. If a student were to need medical attention outside the hours of a student health center, they would most likely be directed to an emergency room or urgent care center, just as they currently are with any other medical need.

FUNDING
This bill will create a special fund, administered by the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, to provide grants of $200,000 to each on-campus student health center for the training and equipment to prepare them to provide abortion by medication techniques. A consortium of funders has stepped forward to cover the full preparation costs for implementation on every public university campus in California. Estimated costs are $10.3 million, which has already been raised. The funders are also prepared to increase the funds if a greater need exists. If requested by student health centers, the fund will also support training to improve or expand the health centers’ contraceptive services.

This bill will require public university student health centers to participate in an extensive evaluation and participate in efforts to ensure their centers receive the third-party reimbursements already available for medication abortion.

Student Health Insurance and MediCal already pay for abortions in California.

For more information, contact Marj Plumb at marjp@womensfoundca.org

2 The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. The Safety and Quality of Abortion Care in the United States.
3 UCSF, School of Medicine, Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health. Evaluating University of California and California State University capacity to provide medication abortion. 2017
SPONSORS
ACCESS Women's Health Justice
ACLU of California
ACT for Women and Girls
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice California
Students United for Reproductive Justice at UC Berkeley
Women's Foundation of California, Women's Policy Institute

SUPPORTERS
Advocates for Youth
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA
American Association of University Women, CA
American Association of University Women, San Jose
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District IX
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association, California
American Public Health Association, Sexual and Reproductive Health Section
Anti-Defamation League
Associated Students of University of California
Associated Students of University of California at San Diego
Associated Students Inc. of Sacramento State
Black Women for Wellness
Business and Professional Women of Nevada County
Cabrillo College
California Academy of Family Physicians
California Faculty Association
California Insurance Commission
California Medical Association
California Nurse Midwives Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN)
California State Student Association
California Women's Law Center
CARE Advocacy Services at UC Santa Barbara
Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Research and Education for Gender and Sexuality (CREGS)
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice (CRRJ)
City of Berkeley
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
Code Blue, UC Davis School of Medicine
Community Action Fund of Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Feminist Majority Foundation
Forward Together
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Hollywood NOW
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
IGNITE
Impact Hub Oakland
Innovating Education in Reproductive Health (IERH)
Korean Resource Center (KRC)
Lawyers Club San Diego
League of Women Voters of California
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Los Angeles Coalition for Reproductive Justice
Los Angeles County Democratic Party
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Maternal and Child Health Access
Medical Students for Choice, California Northstate University College of Medicine
Medical Students for Choice, National Office
Medical Students for Choice, Stanford University
Medical Students for Choice, Touro University
Medical Students for Choice, UC Davis School of Medicine
Medical Students for Choice, UC San Diego School of Medicine
Medical Students for Choice, UC San Francisco
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project
National Abortion Federation
National Association of Social Workers, CA Chapter
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Jewish Women, California
National Council of Jewish Women, Long Beach Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Nevada County Citizens for Choice
Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health
Our Bodies Ourselves
Pharmacists Planning Services, Inc.
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Planned Parenthood Action Fund of the Pacific Southwest
Planned Parenthood Advocates Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Planned Parenthood California Central Coast
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Planned Parenthood Northern California Action Fund
Positive Women’s Network
Power to Decide, The Campaign to Prevent Unplanned Pregnancy
Public Health Justice Collective
Reproductive Health Access Project (RHAP)
Reproductive Health Education in Family Medicine (RHEDI)
San Jose State Associated Students
Santa Barbara Women’s Political Committee
SIA Legal Team
SIECUS Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
Society of Family Planning
Society of Women Engineers at UCLA
Stanford University School of Medicine, Obstetrics/Gynecology Student Interest Group
Stonewall Democratic Club
Studio M Designs
TEACH (Training in Early Abortion for Comprehensive Healthcare)
UAW Local 2865
UAW Local 5810
UC Berkeley Bixby Center for Population, Health, and Sustainability
UCLA Bixby Program in Population and Reproductive Health
UCLA Graduate Students
UCLA Reproductive Health Interest Group (RHIG)
University of California Global Health Institute: Women’s Health, Gender and Empowerment Center of Excellence Leadership
UCSB Students for Reproductive Justice
University of California Student Association
URGE (formerly Choice USA)
Voices for Progress
Western Center on Law and Poverty
White Coats for Black Lives (WC4BL)
Women Lawyers of Sacramento
Women’s Catalytic Fund
Women’s Health Specialists of California
Women’s Leadership Project
Youth Justice Coalition