



FAFP President's Message

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“As family physicians, we have a responsibility to use clinical judgment and evidence to provide care in the best interest of our patients.”

Your Florida Academy of Family Physicians (FAFP) Board of Directors met in Orlando last Friday, April 14, one day after SB300 was signed into law prohibiting abortions beyond six (6) weeks. The board discussed the disturbing trend in politics that not only attempts to legislate standards of care, but criminalizes the practice of medicine. The FAFP represents diverse view points and personal beliefs regarding abortion, but is universally alarmed by the inclusion of felony charges for physicians who violate the law by actively participating in the termination of a pregnancy. Similar criminal penalties for providing gender affirming care are also being considered this session.

As family physicians, we have a responsibility to use clinical judgment and evidence to provide care in the best interest of our patients. Criminal penalties should be reserved for cases of intentional harm or criminal activity, rather than being tied to specific medical treatment.

That is why we are advocating for a more balanced and evidence-based approach to regulating medical practice, one that recognizes the complexities of healthcare and clinical judgment. Family physicians should be able to care for patients directed by their years of medical education, training, experience, and evidence, freely and without threat of criminal punishment, harassment, or

retribution. Patients must be able to depend on their family physician to help them make critical decisions about their personal health.

As our nation, state and profession continue to navigate the current political environment regarding abortion, care of minors, transgender care, gun violence, and COVID-19, the FAFP will be working with the AAFP and other partners to develop practice resources to assist members in avoiding legal pitfalls and counseling their patients. Furthermore, FAFP's continuing professional development committee remains committed to developing medical education activities and materials focused on informing our members of the changes and the potential impact on caring for your patients.

Considering the fact that all actions have consequences, the FAFP calls upon our state leaders and legislators to recognize and address the associated policies this legislation may impact: the need to invest in families and expand health insurance coverage, particularly to women and children, and to strengthen Florida's family medicine workforce to bridge the chasm of medical and mental health needs. Your FAFP will continue to represent and address the importance of these issues with legislators as you continue to do the most critical advocacy work ever – caring for your patients.