SMFM Supports Ohio Ballot Initiative to Protect Access to Reproductive Health

February 21, 2023, Washington, DC - Today, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) announced its endorsement of a ballot initiative that would protect access to evidence-based reproductive health care for individuals and families living in Ohio.

“SMFM is proud to support our Ohio-based members, Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom, and Protect Choice Ohio to advance a ballot initiative that would enshrine the right to reproductive health care, including abortion care, in the state’s constitution. Maternal-fetal medicine subspecialists understand the critical role of abortion care in obstetrics, especially for individuals experiencing a high-risk pregnancy. Individuals with high-risk pregnancies are more likely to experience medical complications – for themselves, their fetus(es), or both – that can lead to increased maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality. When complications arise during pregnancy, abortion may be required to protect the pregnant individual’s life or health.

Before and since the Dobbs decision, patients in Ohio have faced numerous legislative barriers when seeking abortion care and clinicians have struggled to provide patients with evidence-based, patient-centered care. These harmful barriers disregard patient autonomy, harm the physician-patient relationship, and have forced high-risk pregnant patients to travel for and delay medically indicated care or precluded patients from receiving necessary abortion care altogether. Moreover, these effects fall disproportionately on those who are most marginalized, and only worsen health disparities and inequities.

The ballot initiative would greatly improve access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care, including abortion care in Ohio. SMFM calls on voters across the state to join us in the effort to protect access to abortion care by lending your signatures, time, and support to the campaign.

While SMFM is proud to endorse the work of Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom and Protect Choice Ohio, we recognize that the proposed ballot initiative will leave some high-risk pregnancy patients and others unable to receive the compassionate, evidence-based care they need in Ohio. Leaving the door open to any legislative restrictions on abortion access later in pregnancy will present challenges to evidence-based patient care. Individuals experiencing a high-risk pregnancy can need abortion care later in pregnancy due to the onset or exacerbation of a condition that threatens the individual’s life or health. Further, the diagnosis of fetal genetic conditions or physical impairments also often occurs in the second or third trimester. SMFM continues to work toward a future where individuals across the country – including Ohio – have access to abortion care without legislative interference.”

###

About SMFM
The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), founded in 1977, is the medical professional society for maternal-fetal medicine subspecialists, who are obstetricians with additional training in high-risk pregnancies. SMFM represents more than 5,500 members who care for high-risk pregnant people and provides education, promotes research, and engages in advocacy to advance optimal and equitable perinatal outcomes for all people who desire and experience pregnancy. For more information, visit SMFM.org.