

## **Affirming Safe Legal Abortion Care as a Public Health Need**

WHEREAS access to safe, legal, abortion is associated with decreased national maternal mortality rates and infant mortality rates,<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 78,000 deaths occur each year worldwide resulting from complications of unsafe, illegal abortions, representing 13% of all pregnancy-related deaths each year,<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS today, a woman's risk of dying from an abortion-related complication in the United States is just 0.4 per 100,000,<sup>2</sup> and

WHEREAS colleague medical and public health organizations including the American Medical Association (AMA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Society for Adolescent Medicine have all made public statements supporting the availability of safe, legal abortion.<sup>3-6</sup> For example, APHA states, "safe legal abortion should be available to all women. Further, the provision of abortion within the usual channels of medical care will reduce the well-known adverse health effects of illegal abortion."<sup>6</sup>, and

WHEREAS American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) policy on Reproductive Decisions currently states that the "physician should provide to the pregnant patient information regarding "availability of safe, legal abortion services should she choose not to continue the pregnancy" or "identify resources where such information can be obtained.", and

WHEREAS AAFP policy on Reproductive Decisions also currently states "should a woman become pregnant, it is her legal right to make reproductive decisions", now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the NYSAFP delegates bring a resolution to the AAFP Congress of Delegates requesting the AAFP statement on Reproductive Decisions be amended to state that "safe, legal abortion must remain available in order prevent the maternal morbidity and mortality associated with illegal abortion."

<sup>1</sup>Alan Guttmacher Institute. *Sharing Responsibility: Women, Society and Abortion Worldwide*, New York: AGI, 1999.

<sup>2</sup>Finer LB, Henshaw SK, Abortion incidence and services in the United States in 2000. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2003, 35(1):6-15.

<sup>3</sup>Society for Adolescent Medicine. Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 1991;12:649-661.

<sup>4</sup>American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Adolescence. Counseling the adolescent about pregnancy options. *Pediatrics*;1989;83:135-7.

<sup>5</sup>American Medical Association. H-295.923 Medical Training and Termination of Pregnancy. Available at [http://www.ama-assn.org/apps/pf\\_new/pf\\_online?f\\_n=browse&doc=policyfiles/HnE/H-295.923.HTM](http://www.ama-assn.org/apps/pf_new/pf_online?f_n=browse&doc=policyfiles/HnE/H-295.923.HTM).

<sup>6</sup>American Public Health Association. Statement 6803. Abortion. 1/1/1968.