

**Oral Statement of Donna J. Harrison M.D. Executive Director,
American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists at
the Congressional Briefing: Conscience Protection Act July 8, 2016**

As Executive Director of The American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, representing 4000 obgyns and other reproductive health care professionals, I routinely hear from medical students, residents and members of my organization who are being pressured to kill their unborn patients. I know students denied residency positions, fully tenured faculty fired for testifying in court cases, defending the lives of their fetal patients, or teaching about the scientific fact of human existence from fertilization. Physicians who practice according to the Hippocratic Oathⁱ are expelled from the medical system or prevented from entering it for refusing to cooperate in the killing of their patients. And the ACLU has recently launched a project to force hospitals to perform abortions. Through our attorneys at ADF, AAPLOG has intervened to help defend these Catholic hospitals and the pro-life medical professionals that work there.

Who do you want to care for you and your family: a physician with moral integrity or a physician without moral integrity? Most patients want a physician who shares their moral values and most U.S. women think killing unborn children is wrong.

Elective abortion is not medical care. Killing human beings to solve social problems is not medical care. As stated in the International Dublin Declaration on Maternal Healthⁱⁱ, and our AAPLOG mission statementⁱⁱⁱ, killing our unborn patients has no place in the practice of the healing arts.

85% of obstetricians do not perform elective abortions. It is not from lack of skill. We don't kill unborn patients because we went into medicine to care for both the pregnant mother and her unborn child. We don't want to be forced to use our professional skills to participate in killing one of our patients.

I speak to medical student groups across the country. Medical students tell me frequently that they are interested in obgyn, but they won't train in it because they don't want to be forced to kill unborn children. No wonder there is a shortage of obgyns and costs are rising. On paper, federal and state conscience laws protect rights of conscience. But these students see

Life. It's why we are here.

the grim reality -- those protections are worthless without a right of action when the Administration refuses to enforce the law.

Compelling medical professionals and students to perform abortions won't increase access for women's healthcare. It will force medical professionals with moral integrity out of the field. Women won't have more access to abortionists. They'll have reduced access to obgyns to meet their health needs and deliver their babies.

America used to recognize conscientious objections to killing and allow her citizens to live out their convictions in ways which do not involve taking human lives. That is what the First Amendment is about. But without an administration willing to uphold our First Amendment rights, a health care professional has little recourse. On behalf of pro-life medical professionals and the women and unborn children they serve, I urge you to pass the Conscience Protection Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna J. Harrison M.D.
Executive Director
American Association of Pro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists

ⁱ <http://www.hippocraticregistry.com/>

Original Oath of Hippocrates

I swear by Apollo, Physician and Aesclepius, Hygeia and Panacea and all the gods and goddesses, making them my witness, that I will fulfill according to my ability and judgement, this oath and this covenant:

To hold him who has taught me this art as equal to my parents and to live in partnership to him, and if he is in need of money to give him a share of mine, and to regard his offspring as equal to my brother in male lineage and to teach them this art – if they deserve to learn it – without fee and covenant; to give a share of precepts and oral instruction and all the other learning to my sons and to the sons of him who has instructed me and to pupils who have signed the covenant and taken an oath according to the medical law, but to no one else.

I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgement; **I will keep them from harm and injustice.**

Life. It's why we are here.

I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly, I will not give a woman an abortive remedy. In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art.

I will not use the knife, not even from sufferers from stone, but will withdraw in favour of such men as are engaged in this work.

Whatever house I visit, I will come for the benefit of the sick, remaining free of all intentional injustice, of all mischief and in particular of sexual relations with both female and male persons, be they free or slaves.

Whatever I may see or hear in the course of the treatment or even outside the treatment in regard to the life of men, which on no account one must spread abroad, I will keep to myself holding such things shameful to be spoken about.

If I fulfill this oath and do not violate it, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and art, being honoured with fame among all men for all time to come. If I transgress it and swear falsely, may the opposite of all this be my lot.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.dublinderclaration.com/>

“DUBLIN DECLARATION ON MATERNAL HEALTHCARE

“As experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynaecology, we affirm that direct abortion – the purposeful destruction of the unborn child – is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman.

We uphold that there is a fundamental difference between abortion, and necessary medical treatments that are carried out to save the life of the mother, even if such treatment results in the loss of life of her unborn child.

We confirm that the prohibition of abortion does not affect, in any way, the availability of optimal care to pregnant women.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Mission Statement of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The reason AAPLOG exists is to encourage and equip its members and other concerned medical professionals to provide an evidence-based rationale for defending the lives of both the pregnant mother and her unborn child.

In support of this mission, AAPLOG affirms:

- That we, as physicians, are responsible for the care and well-being of both our pregnant woman patient and her unborn child;
- That the unborn child is a human being from the time of fertilization;
- That elective disruption/abortion of human life at any time from fertilization onward constitutes the willful destruction of an innocent human being, and that this procedure will have no place in our practice of the healing arts;
- That we are committed to educate abortion-vulnerable patients, the general public, pregnancy center counsellors, and our medical colleagues regarding the medical and psychological complications associated with induced abortion, as evidenced in the scientific literature; and,
- That we are deeply concerned about the profound, adverse effects that elective abortion imposes, not just on the women, but also on the entire involved family, and on our society at large.

Life. It's why we are here.