

FAMILY PLANNING NSW

ABORTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Family Planning NSW respects and accedes to the rights of people to have autonomy to control and decide freely on all matters related to their reproductive and sexual health.

Family Planning NSW believes that doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other qualified practitioners, and women themselves, should not be criminalised by performing or choosing to have a medical or surgical abortion.

Family Planning NSW supports the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) policy on abortion and is committed to working for the elimination of unsafe abortion and for increasing access to safe and affordable abortions in a non-judgmental environment.

SCOPE

All Family Planning NSW.

POLICY DETAILS

Family Planning NSW recognises

- that the health status of a person is enhanced when safe and reliable methods of fertility regulation, including contraception and abortion, are readily available
- that a supportive legal environment is necessary for a person to be able to exercise their reproductive rights including access to safe abortion services
- that access to abortion services in NSW is inequitable. People who are socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged face greater barriers to accessing an abortion than people with financial means living in a city

Family Planning NSW believes

- that a person has the right to safe, legal, affordable, high quality medical services and evidence-based information when considering their pregnancy options

- that abortion is a medical service and should be regulated under health care legislation that people should have access to both medical and surgical abortion
- that pre and post-abortion counselling, education, information and a broad range of contraceptive methods should be available for the prevention of further unplanned pregnancies
- that abortion services should be provided within a broader reproductive health policy and service framework and should be available to women in conditions that recognise the person's right to make decisions about her pregnancy options free of discrimination, coercion and violence
- that access to abortion services should be equitable bearing in mind cost, geographical considerations, social and economic disadvantage, and service availability
- that the full range of safe and effective contraceptive methods should be readily available in Australia including emergency contraception. Family Planning NSW believes that provision of a wide range of contraceptive options enables individuals to select the method which most suits them and best meets their needs
- that abortion services should remain within the Medicare Benefits Schedule and that rebates should be adequate to reimburse the client for the cost of the abortion procedure

Family Planning NSW is committed to

- the promotion and provision of reproductive and sexual health information that meets the needs of all people, including people with low literacy and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- providing the full range of safe, effective, affordable methods of contraception for the prevention of unplanned pregnancies
- providing accurate information relating to pregnancy options and to providing clinical referrals to services

- the provision of evidence-informed, client-centred medical and surgical abortion services by trained and credentialed health practitioners in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures
- conducting research into new and effective methods of contraception, abortion service provision, and other reproductive and sexual health issues
- achieving equity of access to abortion for all women who need it

Statement of Principle

Family Planning NSW believes that abortion should be legal, safe and accessible to all people to safeguard health and basic human rights to safety and security of the person.

Status of abortion in Australia

Many people believe that abortion on demand is legal in Australia. While there are provisions that allow legal abortions in some circumstances in all States and Territories, the conditions that need to be met in order for abortion to be lawful are often quite restrictive. Laws vary across Australian jurisdictions; in NSW abortion was removed from the criminal code in October 2019 with the passage of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. Women and pregnant people are no longer at risk of prosecution for procuring their own abortion and doctors are able to perform an abortion,, after gaining informed consent, up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. After 22 weeks of pregnancy, abortions must occur in a hospital or approved health facility by a specialist medical practitioner who has consulted with another practitioner.

REFERENCE

Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 (NSW). Available at http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/alra2019209/ [Online, updated 3 October 2019]. Accessed on 21 October 2019.

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Children by Choice website. Australian abortion law and practice. Available at <https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/factsandfigures/australianabortionlawandpractice>. [Online, updated 4 October 2019]. Accessed on 21 October 2019.