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National Black Nurses Association (NBNA), Inc Statement on Reproductive Health

SILVER SPRING, MD, (July 1, 2022) – As an association of Black nursing professionals who are dedicated to ensuring access to high quality comprehensive health services for black communities, we have major concerns with the recent SCOTUS decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. This decision promises to limit access to comprehensive patient centered reproductive health services, especially for Black women who are already at high risk for poor prenatal care and maternal outcomes. The unintended consequences of this decision could cause unnecessary patient trauma and death.

Access to comprehensive reproductive health is essential for all women and families and anything that limits this access will have severe repercussions on overall health outcomes for this population. The SCOTUS decision will force many healthcare professionals, including some nurses to violate their sacred oaths of practice to do no harm when they are told that they must by law disregard evidence-based guidelines and standards of care that they have followed for decades. Many nurses will be in an untenable position and may decide to leave the profession. This exodus of nurses will have a profound effect on the numbers of professionals that are needed to monitor and care for an increased number of women with high -risk complex pregnancies and those needing other lifesaving interventions.

As nurses, we are trained to serve all patients to the best of our abilities. Abortion is a common medical intervention that is vitally important to the lives, health, and well-being of those who need or desire it. Denying access to abortions and being forced to continue pregnancy will in some cases put the lives and well-being of women at great risk. This decision could also decrease the maternal nursing professional workforce that are trained to provide and assist in reproductive services. Eliminating and otherwise restricting access to legal abortion services will force many to seek unsafe alternatives without the guidance of healthcare providers. These types of medical decisions should be made between patients and their chosen healthcare providers and the SCOTUS decision removes this option.

The SCOTUS decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* ignores patient autonomy, comprehensive reproductive health services, the patient–clinician relationship, and fundamental women rights. It also disproportionately impacts Black and other women of color. According to the CDC, these populations have a maternal death rate that is two to three times higher than White women, and they continue to experience health care disparities. Comprehensive reproductive health care restrictions will only serve to further exacerbate the Black maternal mortality crisis here in the United States. We therefore maintain our commitment to our patients, the Black communities we serve, and vow to continue fighting for equitable access to high quality comprehensive reproductive health services.

NBNA serves as the voice for more than 300,000 historically underrepresented Black Nurses and we fully believe in the nursing code of ethics that calls us to practice with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person. As a nurse, we are not guided by personal bias with delivering optimal care - we are health care professionals with an ethical obligation to patients and our communities to serve them regardless of social status, gender, preferences, etc. Thus, NBNA stands in firm solidarity with reproductive health organizations and professionals in the fight to ensure access to comprehensive reproductive health services. We urge our healthcare colleagues across the country to join us as we advocate for safe living, healthy lives, and equitable access by supporting comprehensive health care for all.

About the National Black Nurses Association

Founded in 1971, the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) is a professional organization representing 308,000 African American registered nurses, licensed vocational/practical nurses, and nursing students in 108 chapters and 34 states. The NBNA mission is “to serve as the voice for Black nurses and diverse populations ensuring equal access to professional development, promoting educational opportunities and improving health.” NBNA chapters offer voluntary hours providing health education and screenings to community residents in collaboration with community-based partners, including faith-based organizations, civic, fraternal, hospitals, and schools of nursing. For more information, visit nbna.org. Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#)!

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