

West Virginia for Affordable Health Care Statement on Amendment 1

The mission of WVAHC is to **bring a consumer voice to public policy** so that every West Virginian has quality, comprehensive, and affordable health care, and the opportunity to lead an informed, healthy and productive life. To this end, we frequently provide factual information to the Citizens of West Virginia on a variety of health care topics.

On November 6, 2018 the citizens of our state will be asked to vote on Amendment 1, the “No Right to Abortion in Constitution Measure.” A yes vote on Amendment 1 would add the following language to the West Virginia Constitution: “Nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of abortion.”

Consider the facts regarding Amendment 1:

- *There are no exceptions for rape, incest, or the life or health of the woman* contained in the seventeen words of the proposed Amendment 1.
- West Virginia’s Medicaid health insurance program would no longer cover abortions, including when a doctor determines the procedure to be medically necessary to save the woman’s life.
- Currently, the rights of women to health care, including reproductive health care, are greater under the West Virginia Constitution than under the federal Constitution. Amendment 1, if passed, would be the first time under our current state constitution, adopted in 1872, that our constitutional rights would be reduced instead of expanded.
- Amendment 1 would be in direct conflict with federal law under the Hyde Amendment, which allows federal funds to be used to pay for abortions in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the woman.
- [Statutory language](#) on the books in West Virginia could be enforced that would *criminalize the provision of an abortion with a 3 to 10 year jail sentence.* (WV Code § 61-2-8 through 1st Spec. Sess. 2012)

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care supports public health policies that give every West Virginia woman the fullest opportunity to be safe and healthy. In March 2018, the Board of Directors of WVAHC unanimously approved a [resolution](#) in support of women’s access to safe and comprehensive reproductive health care.

Instead of limiting health care options, we support solutions that improve the health and the ability of all women – in consultation with her trusted health care provider – to make the best medical decisions for herself and her family.

[The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has stated:](#)

“...forcing women to carry pregnancies to term, regardless of their reasons for needing an abortion...will compel high-risk women to endanger their lives, increasing maternal mortality...”

“Abortion is health care. It’s a medical procedure that is essential for the health and well-being of women across the country. Targeting and restricting any medical procedures...is simply bad medicine. Research and experience have shown that where abortion is illegal or highly restricted, women resort to desperate, dangerous means to end an unwanted pregnancy....”

We urge West Virginians to thoughtfully separate facts from misinformation about Amendment 1 and vote their conscience on November 6