

WEBVTT

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00:00:05.359 --> 00:00:07.333

Hi I'm Jody Steinauer.

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00:00:07.333 --> 00:00:09.670

I'm Professor of Obstetrics,
Gynaecology and

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00:00:09.670 --> 00:00:13.152

Reproductive Sciences at the University
of California San Francisco.

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00:00:13.152 --> 00:00:17.271

And today we will be discussing Physicians
Responsibilities in Abortion Care.

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00:00:18.413 --> 00:00:23.298

My objectives today are to first discuss
the concept of professionalism as it

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00:00:23.298 --> 00:00:26.660

pertains to the profession of medicine.

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00:00:26.660 --> 00:00:32.340

Then I will review guidelines for
conscientious refusal with an emphasis

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00:00:32.340 --> 00:00:37.400

on thinking beyond just actual abortion
provision, and keeping in mind that.

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00:00:37.400 --> 00:00:40.110

Aspects of clinical care relevant to the,

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00:00:40.110 --> 00:00:44.210

the discussion include pregnancy options,
counseling, and referral.

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00:00:44.210 --> 00:00:46.860

And then I will close by
reviewing expectations for

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00:00:46.860 --> 00:00:49.120

inclusion in medical education.

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00:00:49.120 --> 00:00:52.480

And I want to begin by saying
that my target audience for

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00:00:52.480 --> 00:00:55.980

this talk is the group the clinicians.

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00:00:55.980 --> 00:01:00.680

Who might feel that their personal
beliefs, may pose a conflict for

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00:01:00.680 --> 00:01:03.470

them in caring for
women who are choosing abortion.

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00:01:03.470 --> 00:01:07.260

So I really want this talk
to be geared towards you.

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00:01:07.260 --> 00:01:11.810

to, to help give you guidelines
on how to think about your, your

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00:01:11.810 --> 00:01:16.610

responsibility to patients and at the same
time respecting your personal beliefs.

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00:01:16.610 --> 00:01:20.188

So, I want to begin by discussing
what professionalism means.

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00:01:20.188 --> 00:01:24.720

And I want to start by discussing

the statement that was written

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00:01:24.720 --> 00:01:26.610

by the ABIM foundation.

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00:01:26.610 --> 00:01:31.070

The ACP foundation, and the European Federation of Internal Medicine.

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00:01:31.070 --> 00:01:35.150

And then further went on to be signed by 130 organizations.

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And they basically decided that professionalism it really is

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00:01:40.550 --> 00:01:43.900

focused on three principles for physicians.

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00:01:43.900 --> 00:01:48.780

One is the principle of patient welfare, being the prime concern of the physician.

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00:01:48.780 --> 00:01:51.590

The second is the principle of patient autonomy.

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00:01:51.590 --> 00:01:54.760

And the third is the principle of social justice.

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00:01:54.760 --> 00:01:58.050

And I did mention that about 130 organizations worldwide have

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00:01:58.050 --> 00:01:59.110

signed onto this.

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00:01:59.110 --> 00:02:01.720

And I just wanted to
emphasize that one of those,

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00:02:01.720 --> 00:02:03.240

is the American Congress of OB-GYNs.

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00:02:03.240 --> 00:02:07.630

And that's relevant to later
statements that'll discuss in my talk.

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00:02:07.630 --> 00:02:12.440

So you can see that if we are supposed to
primarily focus on patient welfare and

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00:02:12.440 --> 00:02:15.300

patient autonomy,
there maybe times when our

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00:02:15.300 --> 00:02:19.950

personal beliefs may conflict with
what is best for the patient.

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00:02:19.950 --> 00:02:24.070

And then this becomes really
an important issue to consider.

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00:02:24.070 --> 00:02:24.700

In our practice.

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00:02:26.580 --> 00:02:29.850

Individuals in organizations
have also described what

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00:02:29.850 --> 00:02:33.050

professional behaviours
look like in medicine.

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00:02:33.050 --> 00:02:37.360

And so these were just a few descriptions that I've pulled out of the literature.

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00:02:37.360 --> 00:02:43.030
Descriptions of professionalism often include words like respect,

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00:02:43.030 --> 00:02:47.210
compassion, accountability and altruism.

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00:02:47.210 --> 00:02:50.650
And really this notion that as physicians.

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00:02:50.650 --> 00:02:55.520
Professionalism means, that we are providing patient-centered care.

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00:02:55.520 --> 00:02:59.335
So that means that we have to put aside our personal values and

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00:02:59.335 --> 00:03:02.230
self-interests in order to prioritize the patient.

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00:03:02.230 --> 00:03:05.250
The value of the patient, and her care.

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00:03:05.250 --> 00:03:07.120
So this is really important.

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00:03:07.120 --> 00:03:12.860
So these principles then challenge us to be empathetic respectful and

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00:03:12.860 --> 00:03:17.310
compassionate towards patients, even when our personal beliefs

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00:03:17.310 --> 00:03:20.240
may conflict with choices
that the patient is making.

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00:03:21.630 --> 00:03:23.310
So, what does this mean in abortion?

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00:03:23.310 --> 00:03:27.500
I've just listed some aspects of
Abortion Care, that may be relevant for

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00:03:27.500 --> 00:03:29.050
this discussion.

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00:03:29.050 --> 00:03:33.510
For example we may be called upon to
provide pregnancy options counseling.

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00:03:33.510 --> 00:03:35.800
To a woman who finds herself pregnant.

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00:03:35.800 --> 00:03:40.310
And, as you will see, the standards
of counseling really require us to

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00:03:40.310 --> 00:03:43.580
provide accurate unbiased
information to patients, and

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00:03:43.580 --> 00:03:49.520
to not include our opinions when we're
counseling a patient about options.

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00:03:49.520 --> 00:03:54.470
We may be called upon to refer patients
for abortion care participate in

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00:03:54.470 --> 00:03:59.430
abortion care, manage patients
after abortion perhaps just for

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00:03:59.430 --> 00:04:03.310
routine followup but
also possibly to manage complications.

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00:04:03.310 --> 00:04:06.260
And we may be called upon to provide
emergency care around abortion.

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00:04:06.260 --> 00:04:09.460
So these are all aspects of care
that I want you to think about,

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00:04:09.460 --> 00:04:12.410
as I talk about guidelines
about conscientious refusal.

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00:04:15.150 --> 00:04:19.480
Conscientious refusal is defined by
the American Congress of Obstetricians and

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00:04:19.480 --> 00:04:24.130
Gynecologists as a time when
a clinician claims a right to

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00:04:24.130 --> 00:04:26.630
refuse to provide certain services.

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00:04:26.630 --> 00:04:32.690
Or refuses to refer patients, declines to
inform patients about existing options,

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00:04:32.690 --> 00:04:37.140
out of the claim that to provide
that service would compromise his or

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00:04:37.140 --> 00:04:39.160
her moral integrity.

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00:04:39.160 --> 00:04:43.790
So it turns out that claims of
conscience refusal are widespread in

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00:04:43.790 --> 00:04:44.950
reproductive medicine.

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00:04:44.950 --> 00:04:49.910
Abortion is just one circumstance in
which clinicians have claimed the right

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00:04:49.910 --> 00:04:55.010
to have a conscious based refusal to
provide care other examples would be

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00:04:55.010 --> 00:05:00.130
settings scenarios of contraceptions,
prescription even or

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00:05:00.130 --> 00:05:04.160
filling prescriptions for
contraceptives by pharmacists.

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00:05:04.160 --> 00:05:08.190
Also assisted reproductive technologies
often included in this discussion.

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00:05:08.190 --> 00:05:11.610
So abortion is just one of
the circumstances in which

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00:05:11.610 --> 00:05:13.660
someone might refuse based on conscience.

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00:05:14.960 --> 00:05:18.810
I wanted to draw your attention to
a wonderful article by Global Doctors for

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00:05:18.810 --> 00:05:24.140
Choice that explores conscientious refusal

in the world's literature in detail.

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00:05:24.140 --> 00:05:27.590

And they just do a nice job of describing
the tension between the right to

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00:05:27.590 --> 00:05:31.260

exercise conscience, and the right for
women to receive needed care.

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00:05:31.260 --> 00:05:35.240

They review the prevalence,
the impact of conscientious refusal.

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00:05:35.240 --> 00:05:37.950

As well as policy
responses around the world.

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00:05:37.950 --> 00:05:43.120

They also do i mention the,
the counter point that there

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00:05:43.120 --> 00:05:46.980

is also this idea of conscientiousness
commitment to providing abortion care, and

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00:05:46.980 --> 00:05:50.190

I'm just mentioning that so you can look
into that if you're interested i also have

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00:05:50.190 --> 00:05:52.790

cited Harris's article for your reference.

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00:05:54.520 --> 00:05:58.380

The other point that they mentioned that
I'm not going to have time to discuss is

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00:05:58.380 --> 00:06:01.850

what is the they explore the governments
role in protecting patient care but

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00:06:01.850 --> 00:06:03.850

also allowing for conscientious refusal.

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00:06:03.850 --> 00:06:07.130

So I just added another citation for you for that.

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00:06:07.130 --> 00:06:10.960

The main point though that, that I, I want to make from this article.

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00:06:10.960 --> 00:06:14.990

Is that they clearly summarize recommendations by organizations.

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00:06:14.990 --> 00:06:17.270

Highlighting the World Health Organization and

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00:06:17.270 --> 00:06:21.520

FIGO the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics.

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00:06:21.520 --> 00:06:27.090

And basically both of these organizations clearly state that the re,

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00:06:27.090 --> 00:06:29.190

the right to refuse.

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00:06:29.190 --> 00:06:33.650

Is secondary to the first [INAUDIBLE] of the physician and that is to the patient.

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00:06:33.650 --> 00:06:36.560

And I already said that earlier in the description of

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00:06:36.560 --> 00:06:38.760
the professionalism physician charter.

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00:06:38.760 --> 00:06:45.680
But this is the fundamental guideline
that exists at, through WHO and FIGO.

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00:06:45.680 --> 00:06:50.700
So ACOG has a wonderful committee opinion
on the limits of consciousness refusal in

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00:06:50.700 --> 00:06:51.950
reproductive medicine.

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00:06:51.950 --> 00:06:57.010
And I, I want to walk through their
criteria for assessing refusal which is

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00:06:57.010 --> 00:07:00.870
very consistent with the World Health,
Health Organization and FIGO as well.

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00:07:00.870 --> 00:07:06.100
What they say is that a clinician
cannot compromise patient autonomy for

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00:07:06.100 --> 00:07:10.530
example by providing inadequate
counseling about pregnancy options.

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00:07:10.530 --> 00:07:13.140
A clinician cannot threaten
patient welfare for

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00:07:13.140 --> 00:07:19.160
example by creating a delay in
the woman accessing needed care.

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00:07:19.160 --> 00:07:21.890
They cannot undermine

scientific integrity, for

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00:07:21.890 --> 00:07:26.280

example by providing inaccurate information in counseling to patients.

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00:07:26.280 --> 00:07:31.530

And their, their conscientious refusal cannot result in discriminatory care.

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00:07:31.530 --> 00:07:34.700

So they cannot treat one patient differently because of a perceived er,

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00:07:34.700 --> 00:07:38.150

immorality of that patient.

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00:07:40.770 --> 00:07:43.400

They go on to describe the responsibilities, so

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00:07:43.400 --> 00:07:48.060

again really keeping in mind the need to respect the individuals ability to

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00:07:48.060 --> 00:07:50.000

conscientiously refuse.

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00:07:50.000 --> 00:07:53.430

They emphasize these responsibilities.

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00:07:53.430 --> 00:07:55.930

We must prioritize a patients well being.

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00:07:55.930 --> 00:07:57.340

We must provide accurate and

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00:07:57.340 --> 00:08:00.830

unbiased information, and

this is a really important point.

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00:08:00.830 --> 00:08:03.730

They believe that it is
the responsibility of the clinician to

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00:08:03.730 --> 00:08:08.550

provide potential patients, with prior
notice of their moral commitments.

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00:08:08.550 --> 00:08:11.350

So that is an important point
that I'll mention again.

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00:08:11.350 --> 00:08:15.950

And also to not use their authority to
argue any positions with the patients.

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00:08:15.950 --> 00:08:18.080

They must refer in a timely manner.

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00:08:18.080 --> 00:08:21.580

And in the setting of
an emergency ACOG states that we

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00:08:21.580 --> 00:08:25.150

must we have an obligation to provide
medically necessary services.

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00:08:27.146 --> 00:08:30.980

I just want to highlight some
of the other guidelines that

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00:08:30.980 --> 00:08:35.330

exist by other organizations
that are very similar to ACOG's.

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00:08:35.330 --> 00:08:38.900

The WHO in their recently published
Clinical Practice Handbook for

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00:08:38.900 --> 00:08:43.750

Safe Abortion Care emphasizes the importance of.

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00:08:43.750 --> 00:08:45.800

Objective counseling, so

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00:08:45.800 --> 00:08:50.150

they state that a women must make her own decision about whether to have an abortion

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00:08:50.150 --> 00:08:55.000

and have parameters about a descriptions about what counseling requires.

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00:08:55.000 --> 00:09:00.350

And they emphasize that in counseling, we must not impose our personal values and

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00:09:00.350 --> 00:09:03.180

beliefs on the patient whom we're counseling.

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00:09:07.160 --> 00:09:09.930

FIGO, as I mentioned, the International Federation for Gynecology and

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00:09:09.930 --> 00:09:13.770

Obstetrics has a statement called Professional and

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00:09:13.770 --> 00:09:16.850

Ethical Responsibilities Concerning Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

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00:09:18.060 --> 00:09:23.650

And they state that we need to assure that a physicians right to preserve his or

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00:09:23.650 --> 00:09:24.690

her own moral or

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00:09:24.690 --> 00:09:29.280

religious values does not result in the
imposition of these values on patients.

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00:09:30.400 --> 00:09:35.390

They also state that if someone
is objecting to a procedure that,

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00:09:35.390 --> 00:09:41.280

that does not absolve us from taking
immediate steps in an emergency,

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00:09:41.280 --> 00:09:43.490

to ensure necessary treatment
is given without delay.

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00:09:43.490 --> 00:09:45.940

So again, echoing some of the,

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00:09:45.940 --> 00:09:51.010

the position statements by ACOG
saying that we need to provide.

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00:09:51.010 --> 00:09:53.480

Counseling without imposing our values.

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00:09:53.480 --> 00:09:56.160

And we must be ready to take care
of a patient in an emergency.

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00:09:57.940 --> 00:09:59.790

The Royal College of Obstetricians and

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00:09:59.790 --> 00:10:05.030

Gynecologists has also made some
statements along these lines in their doc,

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00:10:05.030 --> 00:10:08.890

their document The Care of
Women Requesting Induced Abortions.

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00:10:08.890 --> 00:10:12.110

So they say that doctors may refuse
to participate in treatment,

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00:10:12.110 --> 00:10:17.880

unless it is necessary to save a live or
prevent permanent injury to the woman.

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00:10:17.880 --> 00:10:22.770

And they do state that if discussing
abortion conflicts with your religious or

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00:10:22.770 --> 00:10:26.780

moral beliefs and this conflict
might affect the treatment or

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00:10:26.780 --> 00:10:30.660

advise we provide, you must acclaim,
explain this to patients and

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00:10:30.660 --> 00:10:32.580

tell them they have a right
to see another doctor.

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00:10:35.150 --> 00:10:42.260

So thinking about what ACOG has said,
what WHO, FIGO and the Royal College

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00:10:42.260 --> 00:10:46.040

as well as the general charter that
guides professionalism in medicine.

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00:10:46.040 --> 00:10:50.290

I want to just take a moment and think
about what that means, for abortion care.

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00:10:50.290 --> 00:10:53.610

So it seems that most of the guidelines are consistent that we need to

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00:10:53.610 --> 00:10:57.660

provide pregnancy options counseling that is accurate, unbiased and

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00:10:57.660 --> 00:11:00.000

does include our opinion.

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00:11:00.000 --> 00:11:02.590

Also we must refer for abortion care in a timely manner.

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00:11:03.670 --> 00:11:08.410

We also must, must manage post-abortion care, and provide emergency care.

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00:11:08.410 --> 00:11:12.360

You can see that I don't have participate in abortion care in bold, but

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00:11:12.360 --> 00:11:16.680

most of the organizations have a caveat, and they basically say that.

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00:11:16.680 --> 00:11:21.800

You can opt out of participating in abortion care unless by opting out

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00:11:21.800 --> 00:11:26.410

you're jeopardizing access to care, or if it's necessary for

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00:11:26.410 --> 00:11:28.780

the patient that you must participate.

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00:11:28.780 --> 00:11:30.940
So I think that's an important point.

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00:11:30.940 --> 00:11:35.670
The other thing you notice is that when
you look at these three aspects of

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00:11:35.670 --> 00:11:41.770
clinical care you sort of heard me mention
different guidelines that basically state,

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00:11:41.770 --> 00:11:44.040
say, state,
something slightly more subtle.

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00:11:44.040 --> 00:11:50.250
And that is, if your beliefs would
prevent you from providing, for example.

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00:11:50.250 --> 00:11:52.480
Accurate, unbiased counseling.

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00:11:52.480 --> 00:11:56.340
That is your responsibility to make sure
the patient is referred to someone else.

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00:11:56.340 --> 00:11:59.550
And understands that your
not able to counselor her.

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00:11:59.550 --> 00:12:03.690
Similarly I would argue,
that if someones believes are held so

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00:12:03.690 --> 00:12:07.440
strongly, that they feel uncomfortable for
re, referring, that they must have

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00:12:07.440 --> 00:12:13.120
a system in place to immediately as

someone else to refer her abortion care.

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00:12:13.120 --> 00:12:15.120

And if there's no one else available.

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00:12:15.120 --> 00:12:19.140

It again falls on your shoulders to provide that referral for patients.

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00:12:22.008 --> 00:12:27.120

I just want to talk about now that I have reviewed the guidelines and sort of

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00:12:27.120 --> 00:12:31.240

my sort of summary statements about that, I want to take a moment to review what

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00:12:31.240 --> 00:12:35.460

a study of almost 1,200 physicians showed; in the United States in 2007.

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00:12:35.460 --> 00:12:37.830

And what they did in the study,

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00:12:37.830 --> 00:12:42.670

was they posed theoretical circumstance to these physicians.

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00:12:42.670 --> 00:12:49.140

They basically said, if you were seeing a patient who wants a legal and

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00:12:49.140 --> 00:12:55.690

medically safe procedure with which you do not agree, so you have a moral or

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00:12:55.690 --> 00:12:59.990

other belief that says that that is not an appropriate aspect of medicine.

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00:12:59.990 --> 00:13:00.800

And you're seeing this patient.

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00:13:00.800 --> 00:13:04.150

Now they didn't mention which particular procedure it was or

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00:13:04.150 --> 00:13:07.220

what aspect of medicine it was, but they set up this conflict between

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00:13:07.220 --> 00:13:10.540

the physician's belief and the patient's desire.

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00:13:10.540 --> 00:13:11.690

They ask three questions.

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00:13:11.690 --> 00:13:13.460

The first question was.

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00:13:13.460 --> 00:13:16.710

Would it be ethical to describe why the physician objects to

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00:13:16.710 --> 00:13:18.337

the requested procedure?

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00:13:18.337 --> 00:13:23.650

And 63% of the US physician surveyed said that yes, they

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00:13:23.650 --> 00:13:29.200

thought it would be ethical to state why they object to the requested procedure.

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00:13:30.630 --> 00:13:34.100

The second question was does the physician have an obligation to present all

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00:13:34.100 --> 00:13:38.610

the options to the patient, including
information about the requested procedure?

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00:13:38.610 --> 00:13:43.210

Now, the majority said that there is
an obligation, but 14% in the study said

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00:13:43.210 --> 00:13:47.670

that, no, the physician has no obligation
to present all options to the patient.

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00:13:47.670 --> 00:13:52.230

And the final question, does the physician
have an obligation to refer?

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00:13:52.230 --> 00:13:55.640

And almost one third of
the physicians in this study said no,

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00:13:55.640 --> 00:13:57.790

there's no obligation to refer.

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00:13:57.790 --> 00:14:01.060

So I just want to highlight
that because this stands in

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00:14:01.060 --> 00:14:03.760

for these different questions.

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00:14:03.760 --> 00:14:07.440

It's a different proportion, but
a significant number of physicians had

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00:14:07.440 --> 00:14:10.880

beliefs that were really in direct
conflict to these global and

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00:14:10.880 --> 00:14:14.460
national guidelines, that we have
about our obligations to patients.

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00:14:17.280 --> 00:14:20.070
I now want to turn to think
about Medical Education.

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00:14:20.070 --> 00:14:23.210
I just want to give you a few
examples from the United States.

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00:14:23.210 --> 00:14:27.410
This is the organization, the Association
of Professors of Gynaecology and

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00:14:27.410 --> 00:14:31.200
Obstetrics, that establishes
curriculum in Obstetrics and

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00:14:31.200 --> 00:14:34.220
Gynaecology for
Undergraduate Medical Education.

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00:14:34.220 --> 00:14:36.770
Medical students in the United States.

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00:14:36.770 --> 00:14:39.720
And you can see that one
of their competencies,

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00:14:39.720 --> 00:14:44.820
is to provide non-directive counseling to
patients surrounding pregnancy options.

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00:14:44.820 --> 00:14:48.480
And what they, they actually give this
the highest level of competence required.

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00:14:48.480 --> 00:14:51.070

So the competence levels
are right over here, and

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00:14:51.070 --> 00:14:55.920
they are Knows, Knows How,
Shows How, and Does.

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00:14:55.920 --> 00:14:58.820
So Does, is the highest level
of competence required for

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00:14:58.820 --> 00:15:01.030
these medical student competencies.

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00:15:01.030 --> 00:15:03.720
And you can see that to provide
non-directive counseling,

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00:15:03.720 --> 00:15:05.910
requires the highest level of competency.

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00:15:08.790 --> 00:15:11.500
In terms of Graduate Medical Education
in Obstetrics and

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00:15:11.500 --> 00:15:14.160
Gynaecology in the United States,

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00:15:14.160 --> 00:15:18.230
the accreditation council which
oversees Graduate Medical Education.

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00:15:18.230 --> 00:15:23.230
Does state that all residency programs
in OBGYN, must have access to

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00:15:23.230 --> 00:15:27.410
experience with induced abortion
as part of their education.

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00:15:27.410 --> 00:15:30.870

But they do say that an individual resident with a religious or moral

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00:15:30.870 --> 00:15:37.380

objection does not have to perform induced abortions during their residency program.

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00:15:37.380 --> 00:15:42.160

However, CREOG, the Council and Resident Education in Obstetrics and

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00:15:42.160 --> 00:15:46.280

Gynecology makes it very clear, that residents should be able to

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00:15:46.280 --> 00:15:51.460

counsel pregnant patients on alternatives, including abortion and adoption.

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00:15:51.460 --> 00:15:54.400

And even if a resident does not provide this service,

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00:15:54.400 --> 00:15:56.130

because of a moral objection.

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00:15:56.130 --> 00:16:00.060

They must be able to counsel patients, make appropriate referrals and

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00:16:00.060 --> 00:16:01.340

manage complications.

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00:16:02.470 --> 00:16:05.820

So in the United States for both undergraduate and graduate medical

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00:16:05.820 --> 00:16:11.050

education it is very clear that
the standard is for undergraduate and

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00:16:11.050 --> 00:16:16.650
graduate medical students and residents to
be able to counsel women and refer them.

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00:16:16.650 --> 00:16:17.570
So in conclusion,

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00:16:17.570 --> 00:16:23.180
professionalism requires us to put our own
values aside to prioritize patient care.

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00:16:23.180 --> 00:16:25.120
And if we find that we can't do that,

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00:16:25.120 --> 00:16:28.156
we have to consider our
obligations to patients.

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00:16:28.156 --> 00:16:30.190
And I want to tell you briefly that, for

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00:16:30.190 --> 00:16:35.060
those of you who might find
this to be your situation.

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00:16:35.060 --> 00:16:38.410
That it's very important to consider
doing a values clarification.

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00:16:38.410 --> 00:16:42.560
Which is a process through which you
reflect on your feelings about abortion,

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00:16:42.560 --> 00:16:46.800
your beliefs,
your history with abortion in your family,

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00:16:46.800 --> 00:16:49.050
your cultural values et cetera.

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00:16:49.050 --> 00:16:52.900
To really understand your feelings
about abortion, clarify for

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00:16:52.900 --> 00:16:56.740
yourself to what extent you can
participate in abortion care.

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00:16:56.740 --> 00:17:00.980
And then to sort of balance that with
your obligations to your patients.

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00:17:00.980 --> 00:17:04.090
In the course we do have
a lecture that covers values

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00:17:04.090 --> 00:17:08.240
clarification called Teaching
Professionalism in Abortion Care, and

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00:17:08.240 --> 00:17:10.820
we also have references on the website.

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00:17:10.820 --> 00:17:16.210
And I also want to remind you that part of
abortion care is being able to provide.

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00:17:16.210 --> 00:17:20.500
Unbiased accurate pregnancy options
counseling, and immediate referral.

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00:17:20.500 --> 00:17:25.193
And that's a very important piece of
values clarification as you prepare to

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00:17:25.193 --> 00:17:26.373

care for patients.

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00:17:26.373 --> 00:17:27.136

Thank you.