



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

NYS SENATOR MAYER AND NYS ASSEMBLYMEMBER REYES HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE WITH ACT ACCESS AND ABORTION MEDICATION ADVOCATES TO RALLY FOR THE PASSAGE OF A1709/S1066A

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER April 19, 2023

| ISSUE: **ABORTION, TELEHEALTH, ROE V. WADE, ALLIANCE FOR HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE V. FDA**

ALBANY — ACT Access, the sponsors of A1709A/S1066A New York State Assemblymember Karines Reyes, New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, and abortion medication access advocates, gathered to urge Assembly Speaker Heastie and Governor Hochul to join the Senate in passing A1709A/S1066A. This legislation provides the strongest possible protections to doctors, midwives, and other healthcare personnel who serve patients in hostile states seeking abortion via telehealth. As states across the country restrict access to abortion, the New York Legislature has a moral responsibility to make every effort to assist women around the country seeking access to basic medical care. Medication abortion providers and supporters including the Coalition for Telemedicine Access, New York State Academy of Family Physicians, Medical Students for Choice, the Center for Reproductive Rights, Advocates for Youth, and Adirondack Voters for Change joined the rally.

Passing A1709A/S1066A is critical to provide explicit protections for doctors, midwives, medical providers, and facilitators serving patients seeking abortion and reproductive health services via telehealth. Currently, and without this legislation, women can not use

telemedicine to receive care – virtually – without doctors, midwives and advanced practitioners in New York fearing prosecution or extradition. Other states have already passed telemedicine shield laws across state lines; Massachusetts and Colorado, while others are on their way, including Vermont, Washington, California and others.

New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, New York State Assemblymember Karines Reyes, Linda Prine (ACT Access), Julie F. Kay (ACT Access), Dr. Rachelle Brilliant (New York State Academy of Family Physicians), Medical Students for Choice, Advocates for Youth, and Lizzy Hinkley (Center for Reproductive Rights) all took the podium to speak.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “Since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, clinics across the country have closed and abortion access has been severely restricted. Last week, Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk’s decision in *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. FDA* escalated attacks on abortion, invalidating 20-plus years of the FDA’s approval of mifepristone, a key drug used in safe medication abortion. While many states are turning their backs on millions of women, New York will continue to honor its commitment to protect healthcare access for New Yorkers and those who have had their rights taken away and seek care with licensed medical providers here. With this bill, NYS will protect licensed New York providers to engage in telehealth for abortion services to women in states with limited or no access. I am proud to sponsor this proposed legislation, which passed the Senate in January, and help advocate for its passage in the Assembly. There are millions of women in need of abortion health services throughout this nation, and many dedicated healthcare providers in New York are ready to care for those who no longer have the right to their own choices in their home states. Thank you to Assemblymember Karines Reyes, for carrying this legislation in the Assembly, and I look forward to its swift passage in the New York State Assembly.”

“I am proud to be the prime Assembly sponsor of this critical legislation to provide protections to abortion providers using telemedicine to assist women, both within and

outside of New York State,” **said Assembly Member Karines Reyes, R.N.** “As a medical professional, I am deeply concerned with the development of judicial decisions and rulings that have limited the rights of women and pregnant persons, which have a tangibly negative impact on patients’ health and well-being. This legislation allows medical professionals to counsel and support women needing access to vital medications and medical advice, to allow women to retain control of their lives. I am pleased to work with Senator Shelley Mayer, the Coalition for Telemedicine Access, the NYS Academy of Family Physicians and so many other reproductive health advocates to underscore the need for this legislation and encourage the New York State Assembly to quickly pass this important bill.”

“This legislation extends to telehealth providers critical protections that were enacted by the Senate in the wake of Dobbs to ensure that our healthcare providers and pharmacists are shielded from draconian laws in states that have restricted access to abortion care,” said Senator Lea Webb. “As the Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee, we must stand up to attempts by other states to strip people of their rights to safe and accessible abortion care. We will continue to protect a woman’s right to make decisions over their own bodies and we will remain vigilant in our fight to defend those rights.”

“A1709A/S1066A bill offers much-needed legal protection to doctors, midwives and advanced practitioners in New York who are providing essential reproductive health care nationwide,” **said Julie F. Kay, ACT Access Legal Director.** “This bill sends a message to these dedicated providers that ‘we’ve got your back.’ The telemedicine shield law helps curtail overreach by anti-abortion politicians and recognizes that abortion access is a human right that should be available to all.”

“The NY State Academy of Family Physicians strongly supports the telemedicine abortion provider shield law to protect our New York State patients and health care providers,” **said Rachelle Brilliant MD, representing the NYSAFP.** “We recognize the urgency of this bill given

the current political landscape, and would ask the Assembly to pass it as soon as possible.”

“Medication abortion is under attack nationwide, so it is critical that the legislature protect providers here in New York who are helping people in other states access abortion pills via telemedicine,” **said Lizzy Hinkley, State Legislative Counsel, Center for Reproductive Rights.**

“Massachusetts and Colorado have passed protective laws like this; Washington, Vermont and California are on track to pass similar protections in the coming weeks. In this time of uncertainty and chaos, New York providers need as much protection and reassurance as possible.”

Sarah McNeilly, representing Medical Students for Choice, said her organization’s members supported the bill and they urged the NYS Assembly Codes Committee to move forward A1709 as it had been sitting before the committee since January.

“The Reproductive Justice Collective NY is a state-wide coalition of student and youth organizers fighting for increased reproductive access for young people,” **said Sydney Johnson, a representative from the Reproductive Justice Collective NY.** “It’s vital in this post-Roe era when our clinics are experiencing heightened demand, increased harassment, and longer wait times, we do all that we can to expand access to abortion care. We can do this by passing A1395 for Medication Abortion Access on Campus and A1709 for Protecting Telemedicine Abortion Providers. Both bills increase access points for medication abortion, an incredibly safe and studied method, to reduce the burden on our clinics and stop the continual exceptionalization of abortion care and live up to being a pro-choice state. Telehealth access to medication abortion, both on campus and across state lines, presents a deeply important solution for abortion access at a time when it’s desperately needed.”

[Watch the full press conference here.](#)

Organizations That Wrote Memos of Support of A1709A/S1066A:

- Joint Memo by ACOG District II, NIRH, NYCLU, Planned Parenthood
- NYS Academy of Family Physicians
- Reproductive Health Access Project
- Empire State Indivisible
- Pregnancy Justice
- Physicians for a National Health Program
- Miscarriage and Abortion Hotline
- Mayday.Health
- Hey Jane
- Moms Rising
- Juniper Midwifery
- Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Medical Students for Choice of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- Adirondack Voters for Change
- Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- University of Rochester Medicine
- National Women's Liberation
- Medical Students for Choice of the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons
- Monroe County Medical Society
- NY Birth Control Access Project
- Reproductive Justice Collective of New York
- Medical Students for Choice of the NYU Long Island School of Medicine

- Reproductive Health Education in Family Medicine
- Early Options
- MYA Network
- New York Doctors Coalition



