

DOWNTOWN WOMEN FOR CHANGE

February 10, 2024

Downtown Women for Change

Testimony to Health Budget Hearing in Support of the funding of S. 1438/A. 2439A.

The USA is experiencing a shortage of abortion providers across the country and this includes New York state where the shortage is particularly acute in rural areas. This is exacerbated by the reproductive health care training crisis that has followed the Dobbs decision. The number of practitioners who provide abortion care or train other providers to clinical competency will only continue to dwindle if New York State does not invest in training and stand up for women's reproductive health issues. Currently, access to training in performing abortion procedures is limited in the State of New York. Decades of policies and funding structures heavily influenced by abortion stigma have caused clinics and hospitals across New York to limit opportunities for new professionals to train in performing abortion procedures, particularly procedures used later in pregnancy. While Advanced Practice Clinicians (APCs) are authorized to provide abortion care within their scope of practice, structured training has not been made available.

New York State is in a unique position to address these training needs and the abortion provider shortages more generally by establishing the New York State Abortion Clinical Training Program. Under the training program, the Health Commissioner would be required to adopt a curriculum and materials that cover a full range of abortion and related reproductive health care services and would be authorized to enter into agreements with professional educators to facilitate clinical training at a minimum of four training sites across the state.

Since the Dobbs decision, New York State has taken some crucial steps to expand abortion access and protect abortion providers and patients. But the time is now to build on what we have already accomplished by establishing the New York State Abortion Clinical Training Program. Funding this initiative in New York will solidify New York's position as a national leader in protecting access to comprehensive abortion care as well as training the next generation of abortion providers. We urge the Assembly and Senate One-House Budgets and the SFY 2026 Enacted State Budget to include \$10 million in funding to establish this essential training program. The funding request is a moderate amount that will have a substantial impact on ensuring access to abortion and related reproductive health care services in New York. The urgent need for this training program is clear: it is the right thing to do.

info@downtownwomenforchange.org
www.downtownwomenforchange.org